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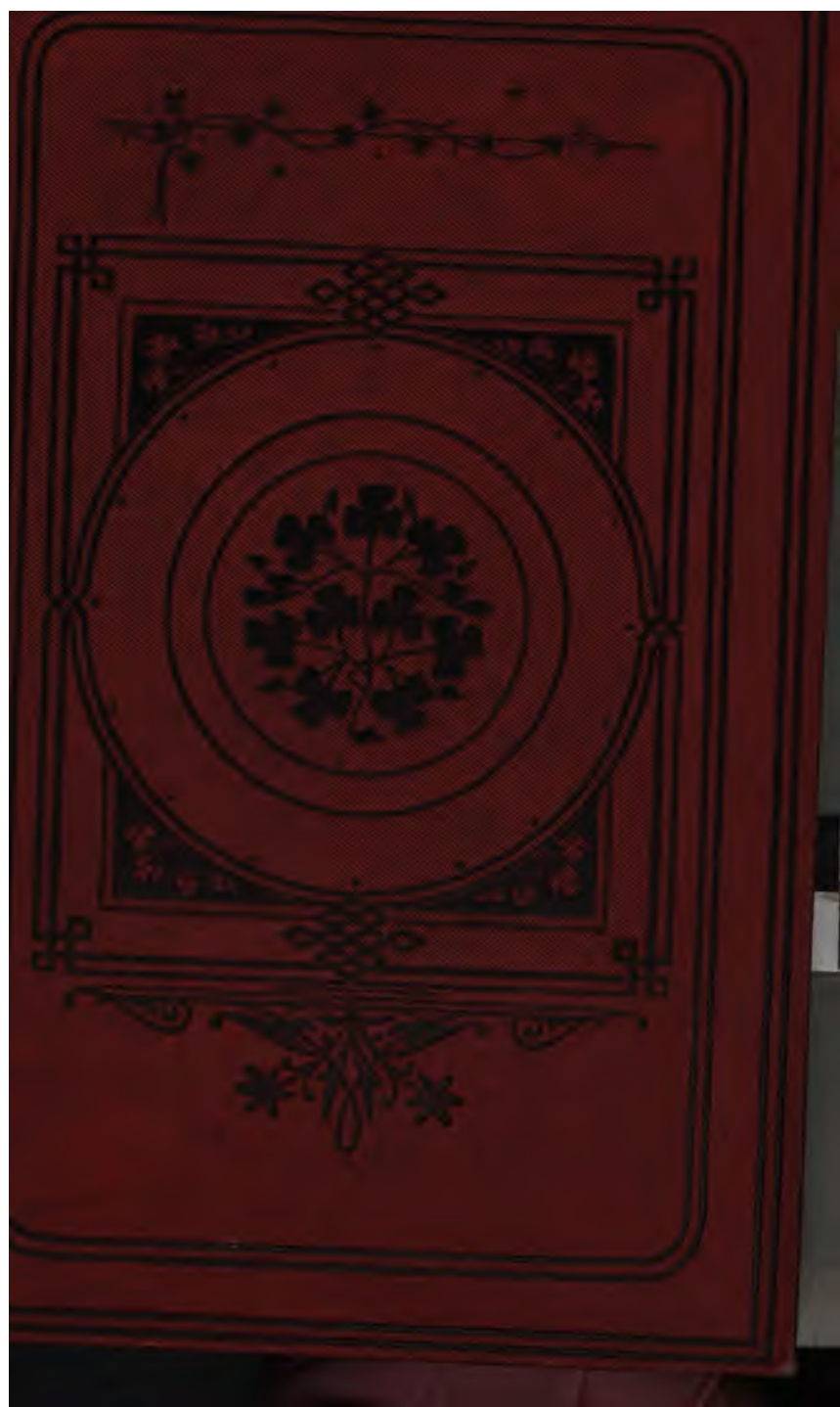
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HOGAN, M.P.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

Miss Mary Hogan

VOL. I.



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"Whatever may be thought of the purity of the Irish Parliament during the brief period in which it exercised an independent authority, there are certainly few things more absurd than the charges of bigotry that are frequently directed against it . . .

"It is worthy, too, of notice that the liberalism of the Irish Parliament was always in direct proportion to its political independence. . . .

"The purely national and secular spirit the Irish Parliament had fostered perished with its organ. Patriotism was replaced by sectarianism. . . .

"It is obvious, in the first place, that one important effect of a purely secular political feeling will be to weaken the intensity of sectarianism. Before its existence sectarianism was the measure by which all things and persons were contemplated. But when a purely political spirit is engendered, a new enthusiasm is introduced into the mind, which first divides the affections and at last replaces the passion that had formerly been supreme."—*Lecky*, "History of Rationalism."

H O G A N , M . P .

CHAPTER I.

“Studies serve for delight, for ornament and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business.”—*Bacon's Essays, Civil and Moral.*

THE schoolroom of St. Swithin's Convent presented a scene of unwonted bustle and confusion one fine, hot morning in the middle of July. Breaking-up day, or, as the Mother Superior preferred to call it, “the closing day of the scholastic year,” was an event of no small importance and solemnity. The whole community, from the Superior and the members of the Council down to the fifteen-year-old novice, were intensely impressed with the sense of personal and individual responsibility.

Each had her own share of the burden. That the invited guests were all the right ones—

that the *déjeûner* should be faultless, or at least equal to those given by the convents whose celebrations had preceded this one—and that the prizes should be judiciously bestowed—was the special anxiety of the Superior. The musical display, and the examinations (scientific, linguistic, and other), concerned the respective class-mistresses, who, between rehearsing and cramming, had had a busy time of it for some months beforehand. The lay sisters had scrubbed and polished with extra zeal; and even the old gardener had been up and out at six in the morning, to rake the gravel walks and trim the sunburnt grass edges in the little lawn.

The schoolroom had been specially arranged for the occasion. At one end was a sort of amphitheatre of benches raised above each other. Four pianos, placed back to back, stood as close as possible to the pupils' seats. At the opposite end were chairs and cushioned benches for the visitors, placed in a semicircle. An arm-chair with a huge crimson cushion, having before it a table on which were piled the prize books, occupied the central and most conspicuous position. The

whitewashed walls of the room were decorated with evergreens. The school maps had been taken down, and their places supplied by pictures executed by the pupils: chalk heads of Zingari women, scratchy and nightmare-like; dropsical infants, with prematurely intellectual countenances; landscapes of the approved penknife and stump school, sewed pictures, and Madonnas in Berlin wool, all in bright gilt frames. A pair of globes stood in readiness in the corner, whence they could be most easily dragged out when wanted. Everything was as clean as possible; even the statue of "our Lady," which occupied the place of honour on the oratory, had been scrubbed to its pristine whiteness, and the flower vases before it supplied with a perfectly new set of paper roses and lilies.

The "exercises," as they were called, were to commence at twelve. By eleven o'clock the schoolroom presented an extraordinary scene of commotion. Nuns in their Sunday habits and full-dress cloaks, the long trains of which, for safety's sake, they had tucked under their elbows, were bustling about in great excitement among their pupils, who, to the number

of seventy, of all ages from four to twenty, and dressed in white, were coming and going, chattering, gesticulating and laughing, with the exuberance of animal spirits peculiar to their age and proper to the occasion.

At first glance the scene seemed one of utter confusion and objectless Babel; but on closer examination the crowd might be seen to be formed of sundry distinct, though often changing groups—the nucleus of each being, in every instance, a nun.

In the corner inside the door, a scene from Molière's *Avare* was being rehearsed by a set of girls. "Maître Jacques," with her fingers stuffed in her ears, was shouting her part to the teacher, who, with a book of "Elegant Extracts" from French literature open in her hand, was listening with intense anxiety, and correcting whenever her ear caught a mistake.

"Oh! Bride Sweeny, darling child, sure you won't say *naysaire* for *nécessaire*. That's I don't know how often I've told you."

"I won't, sister," replied "Maître Jacques," removing her fingers, and falling back to let "Géronte" speak her part. "You needn't be afraid."

"I'd be everlastingly disgraced if you did," continued the sister. "The first class have got off their '*Esther*' beautifully; and you know the Bishop's a splendid French scholar. Sure, you might all slip out here in the garden, and we'll go over it all once more from the first."

"Ah no, sister; we know it by heart now, an' we'd only be dirtying our shoes; and besides, Mother Paul's coming down to go over the problems on the globes. Julia Casey's not up in hers yet."

"That I'm not," assented Julia Casey, who was muttering '*Géronte's*' speech to herself: "I always confuse the latatudes an' the long-ditudes; an' I'm dead sure I'll either smash that brass thing or let it fall—that quadrint, you know,—sure I'd die, an' they all lookin' at me!"

"Oh, Sister! Sister de Sales!" wailed a pretty little girl as she broke into the circle, "I've lost one of my bronze shoes; an' what will I do? I'm to be in the first thing, and right in the front before the Bishop."

Away ran the sister to look for the missing shoe. Miss Casey went to take her finishing

lesson in the use of the globes, Miss Bride Sweeny to get up her answers in French history of the Merovingian epoch. Everybody was rehearsing. Eight small children, who were to play a concerted duet, were being instructed by an old nun how to take their seats decorously on the music-stools. A harp was being strung; and just beside it a big girl, who was to recite a Birthday Ode to His Holiness Pius the Ninth, was impressing a difficult stanza on her memory by the aid of thumping the window-shutter with her clenched hand at every word. One nervous young lady, the centre of a sympathizing circle, was in tears.

The din was at its height when a side-door opened, and a nun of tall commanding figure appeared suddenly on the scene. A hush fell on the assembly. "Mother Prioress!" breathed the nuns, all standing at attention. The lull only lasted an instant, however. The noise broke forth afresh, and with more intense vigour. Petitioners rushed up and barred the passage.

"Oh, reverend Mother, mayn't Sister Wenceslas take this tuck out of my dress? Look, Mother, 'tis a show; 'tis so short."

“ Ah, reverend Mother, won't you cut my piece out of the programme? I'm frightened to death. I'll never ——”

“ Mother! Aloysia Kelly has lost one of her shoes; and what's to be done? She never can stand up before the Bishop with only one on.”

But the Mother Superior heard nothing: she passed on up to the table without a word, and taking up a little bell, rang it vigorously. Perfect silence followed this signal.

“ The Angelus, children!” commanded she in a loud voice, kneeling down as she spoke with her face to the oratory. Every one followed her example.

For an instant you might have thought the room was empty. Through the open windows the sound of the chimes in the convent clock-tower, and the echoes of the city bustle, poured in and mingled with the clear responses of the girls' voices. The rustling of the leaves of the trees in the front, and the smell of the mignonette and lavender in the garden under the windows, came in with the warm air. It was a glowing hot day; and the nuns in their heavy stuff robes seemed quite overcome.

The prayer was soon over: the excitement

of the occasion appeared to be rather incompatible with the duly reverential performance of the pious exercise ; there being clearly noticeable a general tendency to giggle and fidget more than usual, and one tall black-eyed girl, who was going home for good, actually forgot to bless herself at the close.

“To your places, children!” cried Mother Superior, speaking while in the act of rising, and almost simultaneously with the last Amen, in order to stem the inevitable outburst at its commencement. “The Bishop has arrived, and is in the parlour. You may speak,” she added, with the tone of one making a concession, “until the guests all come in.”

She was an experienced commander, and well versed in the arts of ruling—the chief of which is to know when to submit; and she divined pretty accurately that no power of tongue or bell would stop them to-day.

The girls all swarmed up into their places on the raised benches; and the river of talk, which had momentarily disappeared underground, welled forth from its hiding-place with redoubled intensity. The class-mis-

tresses walked about the room, picking up bits of papers, ends of ribbon, leaves of books, and hair-pins, the jetsam and flotsam of that stormy sea of feminine humanity. The Prioress, meantime, had seated herself in her own chair, on the left of the Bishop's, and was surveying the scene with complacency. Everything was ready. The seventy pupils, all dressed in white muslin, with white thread gloves and blue bows—most of them fat and wholesome-looking—formed an imposing body, filling as they did one whole end of the room, from floor to ceiling.

“Now, Mother, everything's right, I hope,” said the “mistress of the schools,” a fresh-complexioned, bright-eyed woman, about forty years of age, advancing, as she spoke, close to her chief.

“They've only sixty children at Saint Gengulph's,” (he it observed that the prefix “saint” is always pronounced long and full—by no means the disrespectful abbreviation the English and their imitators make it,) “his Lordship has just told me,” whispered the Superioress. “He was at their distribution yesterday.”

St. Gengulph's was a rival establishment.

"Sixty!—now, Mother!" cried the headmistress exultingly. "And did you get a programme?"

Mother Superior nodded.

"Oh! and what did they learn of music, Mother? Was it the overture to *Faust*? Oh! I do hope it wasn't; it's perfectly dreadful when you know the priests have heard the same pieces the day before!"

"Better for you not to know, then, Sister," replied the Superior tantalizingly. The sister darted a scrutinizing look at her chief's countenance, and apparently read there a confirmation of her hopes, for she walked off to her post with a confident and smiling air. After a final glance round, the Mother Superior left the room to receive the guests in the parlours, while the pupils beguiled the time as they chose.

"A carriage!" announced a girl, who had taken advantage of her seat next the window to scratch a peephole in the muffed glass, and was enjoying the somewhat limited view to be had thereby. The excitement rose almost to shrieking-point. "It's the Bishop!"

cried one. "It's not; he's come already: 'tis papa!" said the black-eyed girl who was going home for good. With an exception or two, the interest was only increased when the sentinel announced the modifying intelligence that it was only a confectioner's cart with things for the *déjeuner*.

"Carriage, indeed!" scoffed the big girl—a Miss Brangan. "Augh, then, Biddy Sweeny, ye're the judge of carriages: not know a cake van from a carriage!"

Miss Sweeny was just launching a retort to this insolence, when the door opened, and a lay sister beckoned and called: "Mary Rooney, your aunt, Lady Shanassy's in the parlour,—come." Next to the Bishop, who was the reverend Mother's first cousin, Lady Shanassy was the star of the occasion. An awestruck murmur went round the benches; Miss Brangan's scornful look disappeared; and Bride Sweeny forgot everything, in order to stare at Miss Rooney's progress from the topmost seat to the door. Gleefully conscious of her importance and reflected glory as the relative of the great lady, a little fat, red-haired girl picked her way through the crowd to the door.

“Stop, Mary darling!” called the head-mistress, “your sash is crooked;” and kneeling down, she, with deft touches, flirited the offending ribbons into their proper position—the one hundred and forty eyes above losing not one iota of the manipulations. At last, the door being shut, their owners resumed conversation.

“Will ever I know my questions in globes?” soliloquized Miss Casey. “What’s this it is now? Sister Paul says she’ll ask me, ‘Given the day of the month and the hour in Rome, to find where’s the sun vertical.’ *Rome*,” repeated Miss Casey emphatically, fixing the name in her memory by hammering her knee with her fist. “Find the meridian of the sun for the——”

“*Meridian* of the sun, Julia Casey!” interrupted a neighbour. “Declination, you mean.”

“It’s not,” snapped Miss Casey, contradictorily. Nevertheless she borrowed a book to make sure.

“I’m certain to forget the name of that old first *Maire du Palais*,” moaned another girl. “An’ I’m not like you, Theresa; I never can

remember a thing I don't know till 'tis too late."

Theresa was the neighbour who had corrected Miss Casey: a bright-eyed girl with a quantity of black hair hanging in two plaited tails down her back. Her face was beaming with good humour, for she confidently expected several first prizes. "What matter?" laughed she. "This business doesn't count for prizes, you know. Anyhow, I think I'm safe."

"Humph!" grunted Miss Brangan, who was stupid or idle, or both, casting a sour look in the direction of the prizes. "I wish I was safe out of it; papa'll murder me for not mindin' me French. Anyhow, 'tis the last of these old botherations I'll be ever at, so I'm not caring. Julia—Julia Casey," raising her voice, "are you going to Kingstown for the vacation? I am; an' I'm going on the Pilgrimage to Lourdes in September. Yes, an' papa an' Aloysius."

Miss Brangan, the daughter of an alderman, and entitled to five thousand pounds' fortune, troubled herself but little about her examinations. It was not that, like Gallio, she "cared for none of these things," but she felt

that she had enough without them. She would have liked, just as much as Theresa, to be called up for half a dozen prizes, and to play the best solo on the piano; but some sense of fitness, just as much as indolence, told her that it was more suitable to Theresa than to herself. Theresa's father was poor, and the family lived over their shop; whereas Alderman Brangan lived in Mountjoy Square, and had men to look after his shop,—or rather shops, for he had several. They were not at all in the same set, though in the same business. “Whiskey people” are not by any means equal and alike, though people will persist in saying so; and it was an understood thing that Theresa had need of all the accomplishments she could acquire. Miss Brangan thought there would almost be something *infra dig.* in troubling herself about that sort of thing. And she knew very well also that she would incur the risk of being thought clever. Fortune and cleverness together would constitute an anomaly; as cleverness is understood to be the peculiar appanage of dowerless spinsters, and even then is but a questionable commodity, and one by no means

in demand in the market—that is, *per se*; indirectly it has a value of its own, for it is considered rather as a proof of antecedent culture, and consequent respectability, in its possessor.

The doors were thrown open now widely, and the guests thronged in, headed by the Bishop of Secunderabad, president on the occasion in lieu of a still higher dignity of the Church, who was indisposed or busy. An immense number of priests—not less than forty—with a sprinkling of gorgeously dressed ladies, pre-eminent among whom was Lady Shanassy, in a robe of violet silk, slashed with velvet, a voluminous white lace shawl, yellow bonnet and gloves to match. The nuns entered by a door leading to their part of the house, and took up their position behind the visitors. The Bishop, when all had settled down in their places, gave the signal, and the performance commenced with the overture played by eight hands on four tolerably wooden-toned pianos. Fortunately, the instruments were a good distance off, and as the windows were open, a fair share of the noise passed out, so that conversation could go on without intermission. The Mother Superior

was seated beside her distinguished relative, to whom, as he plays a small part in this story, we must devote a few words of description.

A man of about fifty-four—spiteful people would say sixty—years of age, the Bishop was under the middle height, slightly corpulent, but still trim and active of figure. His shapely hands and feet, clear hazel eyes and dazzling teeth, somewhat compensated for such defects as a general coarseness and indistinctness of feature. The lower part of his face was heavy, and gave him, until he spoke and his countenance lighted up, a sulkiness of expression quite belying his natural disposition. Indeed, a more jovial, sociable gentleman could hardly be found than his Lordship of Secunderabad, or one more in request by society. Unattached to any particular cure of souls, unless the chaplaincy of a fashionable convent be accounted such, he had plenty of time to devote to the exigencies of his numerous and widespread acquaintances. Dr. O’Rooney, as his name indicates, came of a good old Irish stock. He had been educated at Maynooth, where, as a matter of course, he had distinguished himself; and his first appoint-

ment was to a little mountain curacy on the confines of the Dublin diocese. After some ten years of country life, he was changed to a city cure. Here his social talents and agreeable manners stood him in such good stead that, on the death of the aged parish priest of St. Columbkille, Father O'Rooney was appointed amid universal acclamation to fill his place. He was not an ambitious man, and would have been well content to end his days in Columbkille Chapel House; but a Bishop was needed for Secunderabad, or a parish was needed for some curate on his promotion; and Father O'Rooney, with grief in his heart, though wearing a martyr's smile of resignation on his lips, left the pleasant pastures of St. Columbkille, the rich dinners, the politics, municipal and imperial, the matchmakings and diversions of Dublin city, for the unknown and remote regions of Secunderabad.

Ere he had been many years in India, a severe attack of liver complaint forced him to return; and whether the diseased organ proved obdurate to medical treatment, or whether Dr. O'Rooney had made up his mind not to face India's malignant climate again, is unknown.

Certain it is that Secunderabad knew him no more, and the Bishop remained in Dublin, retaining his episcopal title and privileges.

All who had known him during his tenure of the Columbkille parish flocked round him again; and his services were in immense request for masses and other ceremonies. One fashionable convent, the prioress of which was his cousin, made him its chaplain. Then, a Bishop's spiritual services being naturally of greater value than those of the inferior clergy, command a higher fee. The class of people who set store by a flourishing wedding notice in the papers, took care to secure it by engaging "the Right Reverend Doctor O'Rooney, Bishop of Secunderabad, assisted by, etc. etc. etc.," PPs., and CCs. In short, this Lord Bishop unattached had very fine pickings among that ambitious class who were not sufficiently high placed in the social scale to venture to demand the services of the Primate or the Cardinal, and whose love of show would not let them be contented with the ministrations of their own parochial clergy. He was a very useful personage, on the whole. Whenever higher ecclesiastics

found it inconvenient to preside at meetings or festivities, of whatever kind, Bishop O’Rooney was always ready and willing to supply their place. On this occasion a much more exalted dignitary had been invited ; but a sudden summons to Rome had prevented him keeping his engagement.

The overture had just been finished, amid universal applause, and the class-mistress was in the act of announcing the second item on the programme, when the door opened, and the portress thrust her head into the room and beckoned the Superior. She rose and stepped hastily into the passage, where she found a group of four ladies, one old, three young, who were waiting for an interval of silence to come in.

“My dear Mrs. Rafferty!” exclaimed the reverend Mother, embracing the oldest lady of the group, and kissing her on both cheeks in French fashion,—“and Eily and Aloysia, my darling children!” and they, too, were kissed on both cheeks.

“This is a young lady friend whom we brought with us, reverend Mother,—Miss Davoren,” said the matron who was the

mother of the two other girls. A slender girl of eighteen, quietly dressed in grey silk, bowed in acknowledgment of the Superior's salutation.

"I'll take you in in one minute," said the Superior. "Eily, my child, how fat you've got! And Anastatia, my dear, you'll excuse me keeping you waiting, but there's a recitation going on just this moment, and you know it takes so little to put the children out. How is Mr. Rafferty? and why did he not come? and Stanislas?"

"Mr. Rafferty couldn't come. Augh! ye know, reverend Mother," said Mrs. Rafferty, sitting down and fanning her rubicund visage with her pocket-handkerchief, "gentlemen can't get away from business that way. Stanislas 'll come to take us home; and he said his Lordship's young nephew, Mr. Hogan, was very apt to come in with him."

"Oh dear, yes," said the Superior. "He will look in upon us; but I don't expect him till late. He's going away to-morrow morning to Switzerland, for the long vacation. I wanted him to go to Lourdes: there's a lovely pilgrimage just getting up now. Mary Brangan is going in September, you know."

"Is she, now!" exclaimed both the girls together, looking, as they spoke, not at the nun, but at their mamma, with a sort of meaning telegraphic stare. The communication seemed to suggest a great deal more than the Superior had any idea of.

"We're going down to Bray on Saturday. No; not Kingstown this summer. It's got that common, you know. I declare now, what with goin' there every Sunday, we do be sick of it. Miss Brangan's to be there now, is she? Well, it'll be new to her, you know. Mr. Rafferty's thinkin' of movin' on to the Square shortly. Murtagh's house is to be let—just a door or two from the Alderman's."

"That will be very nice for Mary to have such friends. I thought Eily was here with her. I must introduce you before she goes." Mother Superior saw everything, and was delighted to accommodate her friends.

Meantime, the young lady in grey had been standing apart, quietly examining a vase of wax flowers. She had been forgotten for a moment or two; but while examining with amused wonder the stiff fuchsias and petunias under their glass shade, she had

smiled at the easy success of the Raffertys' stratagem. She knew they had been watching their opportunity for a long time, and wondered which was the object of their desire—the rich widower Brangan *père*, or the heiress his daughter. It was time to go now. The Mother Superior turned towards the stranger graciously.

“You have never been at any of our exhibitions, Miss Davoren?”

“Never. I have only been once in a convent before.”

“Ah, indeed!” Something in the young lady's tone as well as her accent, which was vastly different from that of the others,—not Dublin, and yet not English of the very decided sort the reverend Mother was most accustomed to hear,—struck her as remarkable. She stood aside when they got into the passage leading to the schoolroom, and marshalled the young ladies before her. As she followed, walking beside Mrs. Rafferty, she bent and whispered in that matron's ear,—

“Who is she? Protestant?”

“Good family. Her brother's in college with my nephew Stanislas. She's not Pro-

testant, for she goes to Gardiner's Street Chapel regularly."

"It's not a Protestant name, certainly. I suppose they're half,—you know, mixed mar'ges no doubt."

Then they swept in, with great rustle and commotion, past the Bishop and the attendant priests; the girls on the benches feasting their eyes in admiration and envy on the rich new dresses of the ladies.

"Julia," said Miss Brangan, "those are the Raffertys. Look at that blue silk: my new one that I'm to wear going away is done just like that, panier and bouffawns. I'm sorry I didn't have that yellow lace. I might have, if I liked it. You've not seen it yet. I got it made lovely. What a notion I had of going home in the old school sack! I'm leaving all me old dresses behind me for the poor. What a show I'd be in plain skirts and no *tablier* till me new ones was made! Isn't that a nice-looking girl in the grey silk, do you say? H'm. She's a nice complexion, certainly, but I don't care for the way her body is done, at all. Pleats are gone out entirely; it's——"

But here a young lady with a very tremu-

lous soprano began to sing one of the melodies, accompanying herself on the harp ; and Miss Brangan's dissertation as to the successor of "pleats" was lost for ever.

Miss Bride Sweeny—or Biddy, as her friend maliciously chose to style her—had not yet forgotten the little unpleasantness of the morning. She did not like to be reminded of her plebeian patronymic in that manner. Bridget was an ugly name to begin life with, in a world the ups and downs of which no one can foretell. It was in vain that she had tried to have her second name, Geneviève, accepted : it would not go down ; and the next best thing she could do was to adopt the compromise Bride. Sweeny *père* had made a nice thing of it in whiskey lately ; and it was quite on the cards that he would be a town councillor at the very next election, and perhaps have a house "*on the Square*" too. Anyhow, she wasn't going to be put down by that Mary Brangan. So after a while she leaned forward, and said, in a whisper to which malice lent distinctness—

"Mary Branigan !"

The lady addressed flushed crimson, but

pretended not to hear. Biddy Sweeny knew her weak point, and how to touch it.

“ Mary Branigan, I say. You’re the next : mind yourself now in your Silvio Pellico, and don’t go smash the way you done yesterday.”

“ The way *you done !*” mimicked Miss Branigan scornfully. “ You’d better mind your English, Miss Sweeny.” She carried the day ; as indeed she generally did, for her opponent was too hot-tempered to guard herself. Miss Brangan returned to her discussion of the toilettes.

“ Thanks be to goodness, Julia Casey, I’m done wid it all. This day week where will I be ? On the Pier, listening to the band, or at the Flower Show. Oh, laws !”

“ Don’t be tantalising me !” returned her friend, who was not to “ finish ” till next year. “ Sure, ’tis sick and tired of it I am ; I’m coaxing mamma to give me a nice mixture dress, tight to me figure, for the vacation. Please goodness, I’ll see something of fashions beyond silk thread hair-nets instead of invisible nets, and aprons fastened at the side instead of behind. Faugh ! that’s all we can have of them here.”

Further discussion was stopped by the appearance of the gentlemen of whom Mrs. Rafferty had spoken : her nephew, a medical student of Trinity, and the Bishop's nephew, a barrister twenty-eight or nine years of age. The gentlemen, who walked in unceremoniously, shook hands with the Superior Mother and the Bishop, and took their places among their friends in the back seats.

"How do you do, Mrs. Rafferty? You must be nearly half through by this, are you not? No? my, my! that's a sad business; I've come too soon!" So spoke Mr. Hogan, seating himself between Miss Davoren and the lady addressed. He cast a sharp, scrutinizing glance at his pretty neighbour; but her head was bent over the programme, and he could not see her very well.

"How is Mr. Rafferty?"

"Well, thank you, Mr. Hogan. You're a great stranger these times; only the Bishop told us you were comin', I'd hardly expect to see you even here."

"Can't help it, madam; I am so hard-worked, you know. I'm off to-morrow morning to the Continent. Yes; a friend of mine, Mr.

Saltasche, is going over with me as far as Paris. He happens to be an excellent traveller—knows every place abroad. You've been, of course?"

"No, never. What's this now, girls?" said Mrs. Rafferty, looking at her programme as she spoke, "That's Miss Brangan called out now to say this 'Sil—Sil'—what? Augh, somethin' Frinch. I must listen to her anyhow. How stout she's got!"

Mr. Hogan had pains to conceal his amusement. He looked for a moment or two at the great fat girl, who, dressed in a costume of white stuff, which accentuated her stout figure most ludicrously, was reading or rather muttering something out of a book. Then he turned aside to his other neighbour. "That is an Italian recitation, or supposed to be, is it not?"

"I believe so," she answered looking up demurely; but her eyes met such a fund of quizzical enjoyment in his that she was fain to drop them again until Miss Brangan, red as a peony, had returned to her perch and the ironic congratulations of Bride Sweeny. Miss Davoren was puzzled to know who her neigh-

bour was. Could he be the Bishop's nephew, alluded to before? She darted a criticizing look at the two gentlemen. Hogan was slight, but compact, and looked somewhat taller than his relative: he resembled him in complexion and feature. But the culture and quick intelligence so lacking in the physiognomy of the elder man were apparent in the more vigorous and clean-cut features of the barrister. He was not handsome, but there was nothing insignificant in his expression and bearing; and under the heavy eyebrows was a pair of grey, bright eyes, observant and humorous.

He stooped a little towards her, and said courteously, "Might I ask what comes next? Grand Fantasia,—something to make us all talk: I suppose the aim or end of most drawing-room music. Then, oh my! why, they have a German recitation, 'Joan of Arc,'—aw, *Skiller's*. That's very deep; quite beyond me. I've read it in the English."

"Indeed." Miss Davoren was perfectly grave, though she was thinking to herself how evenly the balance had been restored between her neighbour and Mrs. Rafferty. "I've seen

'The Robbers' in French. I forget whose translation it was, though. It is quite tantalizing to hear that *Lebt wohl, ihr Grotten und ihr kühlen Brunnen* ('Farewell, ye grottoes, and cool streams.') I am sure the thermometer must be ninety, at least, in this room."

"More: look there!" Hogan indicated with a glance one of the occupants of the front benches.

"Poor Lady Shanassy!" Her ladyship had untied the yellow ribbons which confined her bonnet, and was lying back, gasping for breath, in her chair, yet smiling politely. Her double chin waggled about helplessly, and her round, red forehead shone with heat. It was stifling now in the room. The air that came in at the windows was hot and dusty. The mignonette seemed to have exhaled all its sweetness, and the geraniums and roses in the bouquet before the Bishop were shedding their petals on the red cloth. The priests lolled on their chairs, and talked all the time to each other, or whoever was near. It was positively too hot to pay attention.

"What's this, now? glory be to God!" ejaculated a great fat priest: "the

globes, alannah ! The three Muses 'tis we have."

"Beggin' your pardon, Father O'Slattery," said a curate on his right, "there was nine of them."

"So there was," assented the big priest. "You were at school since I was. Graces, I mint to say: 'tis all one as the same."

The three muses were Miss Sweeny, Miss Rooney, and Miss Casey—the last-named holding the dreaded "brass thing, the quadrint," gingerly in her white-thread-gloved fingers, and repeating the "rule" all wrong to herself with fearful frowns. Miss Casey was first, and said her rule off glibly, but inaudibly, staring all the while at the red cloth on the table with an expression at once aggrieved and ferocious. The globe was twisted and made to squeak. Miss Casey did not drop her quadrant, but was so frightened when her turn came that she never remembered whether she had said everything wrong or not.

Hogan looked on with genuine amusement. It was the first time that he had witnessed one of these exhibitions; and he had little idea of the treat in store for him.

Knowing the three performers he found something intensely incongruous in their proceedings. Lady Shanassy, who in her day had stood behind the counter of her husband's grocery, and whose niece, Miss Rooney, might be called upon to do the same thing, no doubt was as edified as she seemed to be at the learning displayed. He looked all round at the phalanx of countenances: before him, where the girls were seated, and behind, to the guests; but the children looked tired and hot and nervous, and the priests were chattering and laughing and yawning. He caught the eye of his cousin the prioress, and shook his head. She did not know what he meant, and was too far off to speak to him. Then he turned to his neighbour, whose name as yet he did not know.

"Dear me!" said he, "why, this is astonishing learning! What in the wide world? Whoever expected young ladies like these to know such things? I must make a note of it, and keep clear of them ever after. How in the world, now, could I ask such a bluestocking as that" (nodding in the direction of the be-

wildered Miss Casey) "to dance a quadrille with me! I'd as soon think of engaging in conversation with Caroline Herschel or Mrs. Somerville."

"Poor things!" said Miss Davoren, who was trying hard to keep from laughing. Something in the voice made him look sharply at her. Was she making fun of him? She was as demure as possible, and seemed absorbed in Miss Rooney's manipulations of the globe.

"What does it all mean?" asked he, when the interesting exhibition was over, and the globe, protesting all the way, was wheeled back to its corner.

"I am sure I don't know. I never was at a school in my life," replied she. "I begin to fear my education has been sadly neglected."

"Do you like fables,—La Fontaine and Æsop, and that sort of thing?" This was *à propos* of the closing piece, "La Cigale et le Fourmi," recited by a tiny, fair-haired girl of five.

"Exceedingly; Æsop's fables were a great delight to me. He leaves so much to your

imagination, you know. When I was a child, I used to divert myself making up stories out of them—reading, in fact, what was to be read between the lines. You remember that charming one, ‘The Dog and the Shadow’? Now, what sort of disposition had that dog? You can imagine him courageous, risking mortal combat; or cowardly, prepared to fly directly he had accomplished his act of spoliation. Another thing, too. Did he, or did he not, attempt to secure his own piece as well as the other? and what were his sensations on seeing the dog in the water mimic his actions so exactly?”

“Ah, ah!” said Hogan, laughingly. “That is an interesting question indeed: but perhaps he abandoned his own piece as some sort of compensation to the other dog; it might have been an amicable exchange, now, concluded after a negotiation.”

“Yes; one could fancy a bargain,” said Miss Davoren, dryly, “both parties willing and agreeable. Now they’re distributing the prizes. We shall get out soon, I hope.”

The Bishop, upon whose knee the little pupil who had recited the French fable was

now seated, handed books to the girls, as they came up in order of merit to receive them. To the surprise of her class and herself, Miss Brangan was awarded no fewer than three firsts.

"It's a scandal!" loudly exclaimed Bride Sweeny. "Theresa ought to have got them. Mary Branigan, you're no better than a ——"

"Stop," said a nun, catching the speaker by the elbow. "How dare you make remarks on what your superiors have decided! I'm ashamed of you, Miss; the guests barely gone to their luncheon, and such conduct beginning."

Miss Sweeny, impulsive in everything, plunged headlong into a book-closet, and burst into tears. The other girls were racing up and down the room—some quarrelling over the books, more than one crying with disappointment, and all bursting with excitement and long-pent-up feelings. Miss Brangan, with three gaudy red and yellow bound books tightly tucked under her arm, her red countenance all aflame with mingled defiance and triumph, stood with her back to the chimney-piece, stoutly repelling the taunts and innuen-

does of her companions. With the presence of mind and clear-sightedness that characterized her, she had realized the situation at a glance, and had taken up her position accordingly.

Knowing well that she was not entitled to a single reward, she had understood that on the occasion of "her going home for good," her teachers had felt it desirable that she should be able to present some certificates or guarantees of her progress in her studies. After seven or eight years spent in St. Swithin's, during which time the convent exchequer had been the richer by some five hundred pounds of Alderman Brangan's money, it was only natural that at the end of that period the young lady should give some evidence of either talent or culture. Besides, the Alderman was wealthy and of high position; and who was Theresa, compared to Mary Brangan? Theresa would be indemnified next year, "*ad majorem Dei gloriam*," as the reverend Mother, who liked Theresa, said to herself with a sigh, when signing her name in each prize book.

"Never mind," said Theresa heartily, to some condoling friends. "I *earned* them, if

she's got them; an' what do I care? Not one button!"

The nun who had reproved Miss Sweeny was standing near, and heard this. She cast a scrutinizing look from under her black veil at the speaker. Not a trace of envy or discontent could she discover on the open brow of the girl; and she nodded her head with an approving smile. She had seen perfectly that Bride, between whom and the heiress was a feud of old standing, had only made the injustice a peg on which to hang a quarrel; this she, by her prompt action, had prevented. Mary Brangan was leaving for good; "and a good riddance, too!" thought the sister, glancing at the truculent countenance of that young lady. "She'll be married in less than six months," and a little curl of disgust passed over her lips. "But Theresa," and she looked again at her, "what rest will she find for the sole of her foot in the world?" questioned the nun, whose experienced eye read in the clever, bright, refined face a presage of trouble and conflict to come. "We'll have her back here. That's the sort that always do come back."

"Mary Brangan! Where's Mary Brangan?"

Darling child, come out in the garden with me."

The speaker was Mother Paul, the mistress of the novices and teacher of the use of the globes and arithmetic, and Mary Brangan's favourite nun. Not, indeed, that she cared one bit more for her than for the others; but it was the fashion to have a favourite nun, to whom to apply for advice in difficulties such as peculiarly afflict schoolgirls: for example, scruples in matters of confession, difficulties of belief—mostly, indeed, quite imaginary, or resulting from a deficiency of imagination; and Miss Brangan, of course, followed the general rule.

"Now, Mary dear," began Mother Paul, a little old lady whose countenance expressed chiefly amiability and simplicity, "I've got leave to be absent from the *déjeuner* on purpose to speak to you. You know, dear child, it is a serious thing your leaving us this way for good, to enter on a scene of temptations and—and—ahem! constant struggle and watchfulness; don't you, now?"

"Yes, Mother," answered Mary; who, indeed, looked forward to life as a scene of

eternal vacation, and whose imagination was revelling in visions of fashionable attire, late lying in bed in the morning, and never hearing bells ring for imperative duties.

"Come down here, child: the shade of the apple-trees is better than this glare, and you've got nothing on your head."

The pair walked down a cross path bordered with lavender bushes and great clove carnations, the flowers of which were drooping in the heat. The *parterres*, glowing with geraniums and sweet-williams, looked hot and garish, and the perfume in the close air was stifling. They passed through a little swing gate into an orchard, where the trees hung over the gravel walks and formed shady avenues. Mother Paul turned down the first path, and continued speaking, with an anxious, serious tone and look that contrasted strangely with the bearing of her companion.

"Keep faithful to grace, dear child. I know you'll go to weekly confession and communion; and you will come to your monthly meetings here on Sundays and feastdays?"

"Oh yes, Mother," answered Miss Brangan dutifully; but not without some mis-

givings that Sunday meetings might interfere with those promenades on Kingstown Pier to which she looked forward with such delight.

"But that's not enough, Mary dear; there's a great deal more than that necessary. Oh, it's terrible how girls are led away! Now, there's fast dancing: that's the hardest thing of——"

"Oh, Mother!" interrupted Mary, almost with a shriek, "I'll promise you ever so faithfully: never, never!—now see if I will."

"Ah!" sighed Mother Paul, looking up to the blue sky through the lattice of fruit-laden boughs overhead, "girls have promised me that often; and actually at their very first ball—their *first* ball, Mary—have basely yielded to the temptation of the devil!"

"Laws!" said Mary, meditatively and wonderingly. Then, moved by curiosity, "Who was it, Mother? was it the Raffertys?"

"I wouldn't tell you, dear child, for the world, that would be a sin against charity; so don't be losing your time asking me. But, Mary dear, I was wanting to speak to you most particularly about what you know you're most inclined to—love of dress, darling child; and oh! above all things, light reading."

Miss Mary assumed an air of resignation and *quasi*-penitence. She knew very well that Mother Paul was referring to that going-away dress which was at this very moment causing such heartburnings and envy in the dressing-room, where it was ostentatiously spread out in strong contrast to the "sacks," as she disdainfully termed the school uniform frocks of the rest. As for the "light reading," that was the natural consequence of her once having brought to school, in a fit of bravado pure and simple, a yellow-backed railway novel, which had been pounced on and confiscated immediately, and the rumoured awfulness of which had thrown the school into a state of effervescence, and had invested herself with a delicious halo of wickedness and audacity that lasted nearly a week.

"Love of dress," continued the Mother, "is a snare and a delusion; and it is degrading to every one; but it is especially revolting in a child who, like you, has had the benefit of years of training and religious education."

"But, Mother," expostulated Mary Brangan, with a perceptible pout, "papa wishes it; and people must dress accordingly."

"Oh ! I know, I know, dear," said Mother Paul in a resigned tone ; " obey your family. Of course you must appear according to your position in life ; only remember the example of the Saints. St. Elizabeth wore a hair shirt under her royal robes. Never neglect to mortify your own inclinations: that's the surest road to salvation."

Mary listened devoutly to this somewhat vague direction, and began to wish the four o'clock bell would ring and call Mother Paul to her dinner. She intended fully to "mortify her inclinations," and had a vague idea that after a week or two she would get up and go to eight o'clock mass every morning. That, as she had been in the habit of so doing for years, would not be very difficult ; besides, to the intrinsic meritoriousness of the practice was joined the consideration of meeting lots of girls, and of forming new and desirable acquaintances.

" You'll promise me, Mary, faithfully, never to read any book that hasn't got your confessor's approbation. Oh, Mary dear, if you only knew the——"

" I do, though, Mother Paul ; and I'll never

read anything at all, if you like,—there now!" vociferated Mary, who had just caught sight of a group of heads in the dressing-room window, and was seized with a sudden alarm lest any of their owners should meddle with her new dress. Biddy Sweeny would be capable of trying it on. How she burned to get away!

Mother Paul, whose veil prevented her seeing Miss Brangan's movements, stopped, and turning round, looked into her companion's face. Miss Mary was flushed a little, and her black eyes sparkled; the faint breeze that was just stirring the boughs lifted her ripply brown hair, and swept some of it across her forehead—white and unwrinkled yet, but hard. She was not pretty, for she had not a good feature in her face; nor interesting, for she had a determined, bold expression; but she had a beauty of her own at this moment—the beauty of youth and freshness and vigorous strong life, eager for action and enjoyment, eager, and daring, and ignorant. Mother Paul read it all with one look; and she smiled with a smile that was half a sigh, thinking how near the child was to her now, standing there in her

white robe of innocence, a picture with a framing of fresh flowers and leaves; and to-morrow busy with the gauds and pomps and vanities of this world, and far from her for ever.

"Oh! Mary dear, don't be in extremes. My child, that's what alarms me for you: you're always in extremes. And another thing,—now you'll find the time hang very heavily on your hands at home. Go on with your Italian, dear. You read your piece quite nicely to-day; and don't forget it."

"Augh! what's the good, Mother Paul?" Mary was getting cross now; the burden laid upon her was beginning to be more than she could bear. "I know as much as any one else; where's the use of them things?"

"You never can tell, dear; you may be going to Italy one of these days; you never can know what may happen."

Miss Mary had an eye for an absurdity, and stifled an inclination to giggle. She thought that a poor reason, but did not say so.

"I think that's not very likely, Mother." She had already fixed on a receptacle in the lumber-room for her school-books, and beheld

in her mind's eye, with intense satisfaction, Silvio Pellico and Veneroni's grammar reposing in undisturbed peace at the bottom of it.

"Now, dear child, I must go. I'll come down and bid you good-bye at five, when the carriage comes for you. You'll remember everything, Mary, and be a good, pious, Catholic girl, and do St. Swithin credit, and your religion. Now remember, Mary, it's matter of confession if you read anything but what Father McQuaide approves."

"Oh! now, Mother, do you *think* I'd do such a thing?" Mary was positively indignant. They were now at the door of the school-house. Mother Paul smiled as she passed through into the monastery, and breathed a prayer—good, pious soul—for her pupil's welfare; and Mary, having closed the door after her with a sigh of relief, tore up the dressing-room stairs to look after her property.

The *déjeuner* had been going on for some time, and not a few of the guests had departed; still talking and laughing, eating and drinking, were being carried on with vigour. Lady Shanassy was seated near the Bishop, and the Mother Superior was busy catering for their

wants. The nuns acted as waitresses and hostesses at the same time, and ran hither and thither with jellies and ices and more solid comestibles. Plates and glasses rattled and crashed occasionally, and great jolly peals of laughter shook the very windows. None of the pupils were present, save the Bishop's little friend Angela Carey, who was seated beside him, drinking coffee out of his cup and being fed with all sorts of good things; there was a separate repast provided for them in their own refectory, and which they were all too excited and busy to eat. The large parlour seemed cool and airy in comparison with the schoolroom: the blinds were all drawn down, and through the wide-opened sashes the air streamed in fragrant and fresh from the shaded lawn without. The gaudy hues of the ladies' dresses, and the brilliant pyramids of flowers on the table, were toned down by the shade to a mellow richness which the stained oak of the floor and walls enhanced. The nuns, in their picturesque religious garb, with pale refined faces, ministered to the wants of their guests. To Miss Davoren, at least, who was observant and impressionable, it formed a

pleasant and suggestive picture. The Rafferty girls were too well used to it to think anything about the occasion extraordinary or out of the common ; and sat with handkerchiefs carefully spread in their laps, and nibbled and gossiped with the priests, their neighbours. Lady Shanassy and Mrs. Rafferty professed themselves delighted with everything : " lovely " and " beautiful " were the mildest terms by which they could measure their admiration.

" 'Deed, yes," said the Bishop ; " Saint Gengulphus is beaten all to nothing entirely. Where's John ? "

" At the other end," said the Superior. " I hope he's getting something to eat ; it was so provoking I didn't know about the trains sooner. Poor Father Carey got scarcely anything. Lady Shanassy, let me give you one small bit of this cream : the lobster salad, then ? They're made at home, so I can assure you they're good. And you think our music was better, my lord ? Poor Mother de Sales will be so glad."

" Won't you be glad of your holidays, Mother ? you must be entirely wore out," said Mrs. Rafferty, who was holding a chicken

bone most genteelly in her pocket-handkerchief, and picking it deliberately.

"'Tis done now for another year. We go into Retreat to-night for ten days. Father Maloney will open it to-morrow morning, and dear knows that it will be a relief. I daresay in another hour there won't be a child of the seventy left."

"I should fancy *they* will find that a relief," observed Mr. Hogan, who had come up from his end of the room. Indeed, the laughing and romping without could be heard distinctly.

"What do you say, Angela?" asked the Bishop. "I wager you're sorry to go away, hey?"

"Berry," replied Angela, speaking thickly through a mouthful of pink jelly, and looking up confidently from under her yellow curls. "Uncle John's gone away."

"Yes; gone to catch a train, my dear. Poor man, didn't get his lunch."

"I hope you don't forget that I have to do the same thing, sir," interposed his nephew in a low tone.

"Business, Mrs. Rafferty. Gentlemen have not the elegant leisure of you ladies. Might

I ask," and he dropped his voice again, "who is the young lady in grey who sat beside me?"

"Ah, then! and you don't know? Why, I thought you knew her perfectly, you an' she seemed such friends. She's a Miss Davoren. 'Twas through Stanislas I came to know her; he an' her brother's great friends; she lives out at Green Lane."

"Oh, to be sure; I remember meeting him: Dicky—Dicky Davoren, a handsome little fellow, with Stanislas."

Then Mr. Hogan and his uncle took their leave of the assembly, and mounting a car outside the gate, sped citywards as fast as possible.

"God be praised that job is over, anyhow!" said the Bishop, twisting himself comfortably back in his seat. "Fine lot of girls she has got there, too. I hope next year will be as good a one. What a headache all that racket has given me!"

"Me, too; though I was not so long there as you, sir."

"The drive will do us good," returned the Bishop, drawing a deep breath; "and now, my dear boy, what's this you're going to do? and when may I see you back?"

"I can't just say that, sir ; it will depend on how I get along. I wasn't telling you about my friend Saltasche, was I? No. Well, you must know him ; I got some work—cases for opinion—through him when that last Lead Mines Company was being wound up. You surely know Cosmo Saltasche?"

"Bless me! of course I do : the fellow who is at all those Charitable Association meetings and Hospital Boards. Yes ; a regular swaddler!"

"On the contrary a most liberal man ; great friend of Monsignor Bursford's ; says he met him in Rome."

"I fancy now I have seen that Saltasche at Princess Galichini's ; and no doubt it was there he met Bursford too."

"A very genial, pleasant sort of fellow, a great friend of Lord Brayhead's and Lord Ramines' ; he has asked me to dinner to meet them."

"He has,—eh,—has he?" said the elder man, with a dry sort of smile. "Queer couple to hunt together as ever I heard of. One a fierce old Orange bigot, the other a blackleg—I believe he was drummed out of a London Club

for misconduct. I don't care for ayther of them ; you and the likes of you have nothing to do with that sort ; far better keep to your own people."

Though the Bishop spoke in this slighting way, he was secretly delighted, and his nephew saw it plainly. So with a mock air of submission he said,—

" You are the best judge, sir, of course ; but a public man can't pick and choose, and I might miss many a good thing by confining my acquaintance to those of my own religion."

The Bishop did not reply. A large carriage, drawn by a pair of showy bays, whose harness was almost covered with brass, with men-servants in green and gold liveries on the box, overtook their car ; as it dashed past, a stout lady inside, dressed in brown, with a gorgeous hat and feathers, leaned forward and honoured the Bishop with a stare which was half recognition, half curiosity.

" Ah, then ! my God ! " cried he, astonished, " who is this that is ?—I know her surely."

His nephew burst out laughing. " I should think so, indeed ; it's the big fat girl, Miss

Bran— something or another. Just as I was leaving the hall I saw her trapesing down the stairs, got up to kill, and looking over her shoulder at her long-tailed gown. You ought to have seen the faces of the girls looking at her. It was a regular comedy."

The Bishop laughed too. "That girl will have money,—lots of it. Her father's Alderman Brangan. The Raffertys are making up to her: I can see that clearly. Faith, then, Stanislas Mulcahy might well suit her. The money's there, for certain: more than can be said of the Rafferty girls, for all the talk that he can give them four thousand apiece. I don't believe it, for I know where he got it. There's the Brangans' connection, too, into the bargain."

"Do you mean the gin palace connection, sir?" answered the barrister, with a curl of his lip.

The Bishop looked at his nephew angrily; but he had no time to say anything in reply, for the car drew up at that moment at the door of his own house, which was situated in a quiet street on the north side of Dublin.

"I ordered dinner at six," said he, leading

the way in. "I hope it is not spoiled : hey, Martha?"

"Glad to see you, Master John," said the housekeeper, an old woman who had known Hogan from the time he was a child, ignoring her master's question to greet his companion. "Where were you this long time, alannah?"

"Now, Martha," spoke the Bishop peremptorily, "don't be gosthering with that boy, but bring up our dinner. I have to go out at eight o'clock."

Then they walked into the sitting-room, where a round dinner-table was laid for two. It was a comfortable room, and furnished with solid, heavy furniture. A red Brussels carpet and rug, with heavy curtains of the same colour; half a dozen morocco-covered chairs; and one arm-chair, well stuffed and cushioned, stood before the Bishop's writing-table. The sofa was brilliant with bead cushions and antimacassars of all colours and designs. No flowers, statuettes, or pictures spoke for the taste or refinement of the occupant. The bookcase contained three shelves, two of which were occupied by theological books, well coated with dust, the top held a

double row of modern novels, chiefly Trollope's. A few large photographs from Rome, relics of his travels, hung upon the walls: St. Peter's, the Coliseum, and Trajan's Column, looking ghastly and unreal in thick black and white. Over the fireplace a common print of His Holiness, in the well-known attitude of benediction, looked down on a choice collection of cigar boxes, pipes, and matchstands, mixed up oddly with rosaries, prayer-books, and reliquaries.

His lordship drew a pair of Berlin wool-work slippers from under a table, and having got rid of his neat kid boots, slipped down to the cellar for a bottle of champagne, while his nephew, spying a newspaper with which he had some connection, hastily opened it to look if some verses sent in by him the day before had been printed. He found them as he expected in the poet's corner, but had not time to read the effusion before his lordship returned; and as he by no means desired his relative to know anything of the matter, he was obliged to replace the newspaper in its basket. The Bishop objected to literature. He knew the world—at least, the world of

Dublin; and was well aware that the reputation of being literary does not serve a young professional man; and as John O’Rooney Hogan owed everything to his uncle, he was bound to defer to his prejudices. The barrister’s father had been a tradesman in a little inland country town; and he, an only son, had been destined by his mother for the Church. For this, however, the youth had shown but scant inclination, and after absorbing the very limited stock of knowledge to be procured at the diocesan college of—— he returned home to take his place in his father’s drapery shop. This was even less to his taste than the clerical career, but his efforts to free himself from the toils of the hated business were unavailing. After a year or two of discontented servitude, the fates willed it that his father should die suddenly, and he found himself, at the age of nineteen, master of his own destiny. He confided his wishes and aspirations to his mother’s brother, the then P.P. of St. Columbkille. Father O’Rooney good-naturedly consented to give him a chance, and carried him up to Dublin. After a severe and continuous course of study he passed a brilliant entrance examination into Trinity College,

and, without being afterwards distinguished, got through his legal and other studies with the reputation of being a sure and solid, if somewhat slow student. He eked out his resources by teaching ; and on his mother's death, which happened the same year that he was called to the English Bar, found himself possessed of some twelve hundred pounds' worth of railway stock, and not a single encumbrance, wherewith to face the world. He was clever and good-looking, very gentlemanlike in appearance, and had an irreproachable accent—a most important item in our inventory of his qualifications.

The Bishop's interests in this world (his lordship would deny that he had any) were centred in his nephew ; he looked upon him as a son, and, like many parents, thinking in his conceit that lack of opportunity and deficient instruction alone had hindered himself from rising to the highest pinnacle of eminence, he determined that the young man should enjoy every benefit that adverse fate had denied himself. His great aspiration was to see the barrister a judge. He felt that he ought to, and might, be on the woolsack ; still, he thought

he could die content if he could once see him in the ermine robes of even a puisne judge. But "*ottenuto che l'avesse, si poteva esser certo che non si sarebbe più curato degli anni, non avrebbe desiderato altro, e sarebbe morto contento, come tutti quelli che desideran molto una cosa assicurano di voler fare quando siano arrivati a ottenerla.*" And we may be very certain that the Chief Justiceship would haunt the dreams of Judge Hogan and his uncle, Bishop O'Rooney.

The dinner appeared directly. Martha was punctual and orderly, and the fillets of sole were perfection. Neither of the gentlemen had much appetite, as we may imagine.

"Those Raffertys are keeping up great state and style now," began the Bishop; "but he isn't solid. No, Assumption has told me she had always trouble enough to get the money out of him for the girls' bills when she had 'em there."

The Bishop deemed it well to give his nephew all the information possible about their acquaintance. Nothing gives a man so much the air of society as knowing every-

thing about everybody. And it is quite easy to possess as much information as a French *chef de police*, without being in the least a gossip or ill-natured.

"They're moving into the Square in November, when they come in from Bray; by the same token, I believe they're paying fifty pounds a month for the house they have there."

"Whiskey, is he not?" asked the barrister carelessly.

"I believe tea and sugar also. He was a great friend of the late Lord Mayor. There's daughters there, too; but no money. No," said the bishop, shaking his head critically, "I don't believe there's any; but it's a fine connection,—they are hand and glove with the Muldoons, the attorneys."

"Bah!" said Mr. Hogan contemptuously, setting down his glass of Giesler. "People that are the laughing-stock of Dublin for vulgarity; common publicans, too,—traders. Faugh!"

"And isn't it good enough, sir?" thundered the angry Bishop. "Now, John, my boy," he continued, in a quieter tone, "don't let any one

hear *you* sneer at trade. You're in a fair way enough; but a rash speech like that would be enough to tumble you over. I've not helped you to where you are without trouble and expense; and, as I judge by you now, you seem to forget yourself altogether just because a couple of swell Protestants have asked you to dine, and you must therefore be turning up your nose at these decent, useful people. Depend upon it, John, the only way to get on—and I know the world—the only chance of consideration or respect you can have from the Protestants, is to let them see—you being a Catholic—that you have the confidence and respect of the Catholics. The Government can't do without the priests; and what use would you be without *their* back? And to make little of Catholics and Catholic society, is not the way to go about getting that,—I can tell you, sir."

"I am fully aware of that, sir," replied the young man in a deferential tone; "but I flatter myself you would wish me better than to see me tied for life to one of the Misses Rafferty or Brangan. I shall have to marry a Catholic, I suppose; —have no wish to do

otherwise," he added hastily; "but there are better class Catholics in Ireland and England than these."

"But the capital,—the money?" interposed the Bishop hastily.

"I don't mean to marry till I am more settled in life,—at least, sir, unless I find it indispensable. Do you know, sir, that Lord Brayhead is nearly related to the Chief Justice, and his son is to be member for Blankshire directly? He belongs to the Reform Club." And Hogan fixed his keen grey eyes on the old gentleman's face, to watch the effect of his well-calculated words.

The frown vanished from the Bishop's face, and he filled himself a sparkling glass.

"Well, well, my boy, do as you like; it may be an opening: only remember to act with prudence always, and don't be in a hurry,—wait patiently, and the world will come round to you. 'Fair and easy goes far in a day.'"

Then the Bishop and his nephew helped themselves to choice Manilla cigars, and were soon enveloped in a fragrant cloud of tobacco

smoke. It was not long before St. George's chimed eight, and his lordship jumped up and rang the bell.

"Coffee for Mr. John, Martha. I have no time. Did you get any news of Mrs. Doolin since?"

"Augh! yis thin; she'll niver pass the night, me lord. Master John, darlin', don't go now till I give ye your coffee."

"Good-bye, my boy," said his lordship, shaking the young man's hand heartily. "I won't see you for a couple of months, anyhow. Gobless you, and take care of yourself. Write from Paris, and mind you go see Father Pat Kelly at *Saint Sulpice*."

The Bishop was gone, and Hogan waited to drink his cup of coffee. Presently Martha appeared with a tray.

"Well, Martha," said he pleasantly to the old woman, "how is the world treating you these times?"

"Augh! thin; I can't complain as times goes. 'Tis yourself is scarce and rare this while back, Master John."

"Term time and circuit, I'm busy, Martha, thank God!"

"When 'll we have the weddin', Master John?" asked she slyly, handing him a cup of fragrant coffee.

"That's what you're thinking of, Martha, is it? It is more than I am."

"Augh! now, sure you wouldn't let us go till we see you settled in the world, jewel. Nothin' would give his lordship such pleasure, or meself ayther, wid respect to you."

"I'm young enough, Martha, and so are you," answered Hogan between two sips.

"Dear, but 'tis yourself has the fine sootherin' tongue, an' always had, indeed. Himself done well to make a counsellor out ov you, Master John, honey!"

Master John finished his cup of coffee with a good-humoured smile.

"You never forget old times, Martha," said he.

"Ah no, thin! Do you remember when you blewn out the gas, an' had like to kill yourself, the night you first came up from the country, in Columbkille Chapel House? Dear! dear! but you wor' the boy thin, Master John;" and the old dame laughed and

laughed until she had to put the corner of her apron to her eyes.

Master John laughed too, but not quite so heartily; and declining more coffee, set off home to prepare for his journey the next morning.

CHAPTER II.

“ But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow,
Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low;
For, as refinement stops, from sire to son
Unaltered, unimproved, the manners run * * *
Hence Ostentation, here, with tawdry heart,
Pants for the vulgar praise which fools impart.
Here Vanity assumes her pert grimace,
And trims her robes of frieze with copper lace.
Here beggar Pride defrauds her daily cheer,
To boast one splendid banquet once a year.
The mind still turns where shifting fashion draws,
Nor weighs the solid worth of self-applause.”
Goldsmith, “ Traveller.”

NOVEMBER had well set in ere Mr. Hogan returned to town, refreshed and reinvigorated for his winter's work by a long walking tour through France, Switzerland, and the north of Italy. He had enjoyed the company of well-selected and congenial travelling companions; and his party, unlike most travelling parties, had all returned home on as friendly terms with each other as when they started.

His first care, of course, was to go and see

his uncle, the Bishop. Him he found looking well and jolly, after a six weeks' stay at a famous boarding-house in Kingstown, much patronised by the rural clergy, and where his lordship loved to spend his vacation in the society of his old school friends.

After the first greetings were over, and the young man had answered the Bishop's enquiries about his foreign friends, the conversation imperceptibly glided into the old grooves; and naturally the first topic that presented itself, and the most agreeable—personal affairs—was awarded the place of honour.

"I want you, sir," began the barrister, drawing as he spoke an envelope out of his pocket, "to arrange a small matter for me. I find this invitation to read a lecture on St. Ignatius Loyola before the Catholic Young Men's Association of St. Columbkille next Thursday. Now, next Thursday won't suit me, and I'd like to put it off. Saltasche is giving a dinner-party, and he wants me to meet—er——"

"Put it off, hey?" cried the Bishop, astonished; "and what on earth would Father Taggart say to that?"

The Bishop was intensely amazed at his nephew's proposal. The idea of putting off a lecture, to deliver which was such an honour, and moreover thereby to incur the risk of offending such a valuable supporter as a parish priest, seemed incredible to him. Besides, his name would be in the papers, and perhaps a report of the lecture as well ; and everybody knows what an important thing it is for a rising young barrister to get and keep his name well before the public. Hogan had always recognised the truth of that axiom, and from the beginning had steadfastly kept it in view and shaped his conduct accordingly. So much so, in fact, that he seemed to have made it an integral part of his plan of life to appear on every platform he could make his way to. Little by little he came to be known, and through the influence of the Bishop and his friends had managed to secure a fair practice : nothing very brilliant ; but sufficient with his own means, and what he made by his contributions to journalistic and other literature, to keep him pretty comfortably. He owed a good deal to his own exertions—not that he was very hard-working, but that

he was steady and regular of life ; but he owed still more to his friends, and particularly to his clerical friends. Of this we may be sure the Bishop was well aware ; and it is not to be wondered at, then, that his lordship was amazed at the notion of his nephew throwing over Father Taggart for a dinner-party—and a Protestant dinner-party ! There was a ring of independence and audacity in the proposition that sounded strangely unbecoming.

“ Well—er—it will be only postponed. I’m getting up the lecture in first-rate style for him, I assure you ; and—er—there are to be people there whom I may find useful.”

“ Now, John, I have told you before I don’t like your consorting with Protestants. ’Pon me word,” reiterated the Bishop, waxing warmer, “ I don’t like it at all. People in general are against it. There’s loads of Catholics in Dublin wouldn’t know them at all. Haven’t you society enough in your own class ? Why, there’s Mrs. Rafferty. Mother Assumption has told me she says she wouldn’t lose her time askin’ Protestants to her house. It is not approved of at all.”

“ Oh, that reminds me I have arrived home

in time for their housewarming. It's to-night." And the young man, not sorry for the opportunity of changing the conversation, took a gorgeous white and gold card out of his pocket. "'Dancing at ten.' H'm; they're very early in the season, are they not?"

"Rather; but then you see they're new people—ahem! and by getting the start of everybody, and asking a lot of the ball-giving ones, they secure invitations for the rest of the season."

"They are sickeningly vulgar, to be sure," said Hogan, calling to mind Mrs. Rafferty's appearance at the convent entertainment in the summer.

"The father and mother *are* plain people; yes, plain, worthy people. The girls are very well educated—very."

"H'm! to be sure," assented Hogan, absently. He was thinking of the women he had met abroad: clever, well-bred English-women, bright American girls, who had been "all over" and "all round"; the pleasant artistic and literary talks, the clear bright air and crisp autumn landscapes. To come from all that to fog, and mud, and

common-place, narrow-minded mediocrities. "Not know Protestants!" How droll it sounded, after the glimpse of broader, larger life he had just had!

"Now, my lord, I must be gone. I've a good deal to do, you know. I'll drop round on Sunday afternoon. Good-bye."

When he got into the street—which he did quickly, for some sort of impatience had come upon him—he drew a long, deep breath. Foggy and close as the air was, it seemed strong and bracing after that of the room he had just left. However, he was a practical, clear-headed young man; and he shook off the mood and train of thought suggested by the talk he had had with his relative, with a smile at his own absurdity, and started off down town, on business intent.

It was very late in the evening, almost half-past eleven, when he reached Mrs. Rafferty's house in Mountjoy Square. He had no difficulty in discovering the mansion, and was not a little amused at the appearance it presented. An awning stretched from the hall-door across the pavement, the steps were carpeted, and a couple of big policemen had enough to do to

keep back the crowd of ragamuffins who were swarming up the rails and criticising the appearance of the supper-table, which was ostentatiously exposed to their consideration, —the slats of the Venetian blinds having been purposely opened. From the drawing-rooms above, the sound of the music and dancing might be heard across the Square: as the night, though clear and moonlit, was close and muggy, there was a valid excuse for opening the windows to their widest extent, and so securing the desired publicity and renown simultaneously with the necessary ventilation.

Mr. Hogan acknowledged to himself, as he took off his top-coat in the hall, that if the rest of the entertainment was on a par with the arrangements, Mrs. Rafferty was sure of a success. For new people, they seemed to have managed very well indeed. And he surveyed the stands of hothouse flowers and the fountain of perfume which was playing on the centre table, making the hot air more sickly still, with calm approval. At all events, there was plenty of evidence that they had not spared expense; and people are usually

pleased by that compliment to their importance.

In a tea room on the first lobby, Mr. Hogan found one of the daughters of the house ministering to the wants of a group of people, the foremost of whom seemed to be his old acquaintance Miss Brangan, taller and stouter than ever, and radiant in a voluminous blue silk. She was accompanied by her papa, an alderman of nineteen stone weight, between whom and herself there was a striking resemblance; and her brother, a young gentleman of no small consequence, who had just left one of the diocesan colleges. Hogan shook hands with the Alderman, and having secured a cup of coffee, drew to one side and looked about him. Mr. Aloysius Brangan was conversing with Miss Rafferty in a patronising, offhand manner. Hogan was struck by the rare richness of his brogue.

"You're very lucky to have such a fine night," he was saying. "At Kellys', the other night, it poured rain on us. It's as dry as a bone, and moonlit."

"So 'tis," she answered. "We waited on purpose to have the moon."

Mr. Aloysius Brangan stopped in the act of raising his cup to his lips.

"Waited on purpose!" he exclaimed, in blank surprise. "Augh, then! and how did you know you were going to have it?"

"Looked at the almanac, of course," returned she with a faint giggle, glancing at Hogan, who was obliged to leave the room abruptly.

Mr. Brangan saw he had committed a blunder of some kind; but with creditable *aplomb*, turned off the maladroitness by saying, with a sort of bantering air, as of one superior to all that sort of thing:

"You shouldn't believe everything almanacs tell you, Miss Rafferty."

As Hogan was passing up the stairs, he was joined by a trio of college lads with whom he had some slight acquaintance. One of them hailed him by name. He turned round:

"Orpen, is that you? How did you come here?"

Mr. Orpen, a pale-faced gentlemanly-looking young man, of about twenty, glanced over his shoulder and whispered confidentially:

"Don't know, my dear fellah. Mulcahy is

a relative of this lot, and he brought us."

Further explanation was impossible, for they found themselves in the presence of the lady of the house, who, dressed in gorgeous amber satin, had taken up her position near the door to receive her guests. The rooms were full; and as the lions of the evening, the Lord Mayor and his party, had arrived some time before, dancing was going on.

Mrs. Rafferty introduced Hogan to the Lord Mayor, who shook hands amiably with him.

"Glad to see you, sir. Doctor O'Rooney quite well?"

The minor satellites who were standing round looked respectfully at the recipient of so much honour, who indeed comported himself with astounding easiness, and entered into almost familiar conversation with the Lord Mayor and those select members of the corporation who were grouped about him on the hearthrug. His Worship wore his chain of office over his dress coat; he was a little fat man, with oblique eyes of no colour, mutton-chop whiskers, and three chins. His manner

was pompous and self-conscious, as became a self-made man. It must not be supposed, however, that he owed his wealth and high position to either talent or industry. His father had been a working man; and at the age of twelve Mr. Bartholomew Malowney had entered the grocery and public-house of old Barton Rafferty as messenger. From this humble post he had risen to be barman, and after five years' experience of trade, during which time he had been distinguished chiefly by his rare capacity for keeping sober during business hours, he found a friend to be his surety with Trebblex the brewer, for the entry and stocking of a licensed house in Liffey Street. Father Dorney, the then incumbent of St. Columbkille—he was our Bishop's predecessor—lost no time in recommending this thriving young publican to the good graces of Miss Bridget Slattery, a penitent of his, who possessed five thousand pounds in her own right; and a match was speedily declared. So, as the profits on whiskey, especially in the retail trade, are enormous, it is not surprising that his Worship had the reputation of being very wealthy.

"What do you think of the news from France now?" ventured Hogan carelessly, for he knew exactly what the answer would be.

"Bad job, sir. Ah! what they want there is a king or the Impress; they want a strong hand over them, them Frinch."

"Couldn't get along with a Republic now, you think?"

"Nothin' of the sort. Ah! that Imperor—poor man, God be merciful to him!—he was the one for them: a tight hand is what they require."

"You're right there," put in another City father, also a publican and sinner.

Hogan was listening with a polite smile of acquiescence, all the time scornfully contrasting the speakers with the *haute bourgeoisie* of the French provincial towns through which he had been travelling—well educated, clear-headed Frenchmen, amongst whom he had spent some pleasant and profitable hours—and then turned to the last speaker, who continued with an air of omniscience:

"There ar'n't any eminent men among them at all,—not one fit to come to the front.

They're a poor lot compared to what they were—a poor lot, sir!" and the City father gave a sigh as of one who remembered better days.

Hogan smiled sardonically. Remembering the leading article in that morning's *Enfranchiser*, he wondered to himself what their views would be next week; and as he often wrote for that journal, resolved to treat these worthy citizens to some novel doctrine ere long.

"What a meeting that was in Glasgow!" Hogan said this to Alderman Brangan, in the hope of bringing on the Home Rule question, and taking the opinion of the "whiskey faction" on it.

"Yes, faith!" answered he; "an' what it manes I can't make out. What do those Glasgow Irish know or care about it? It puzzles me intirely."

"You don't go in for it, then?" put in the barrister quickly.

"I don't see how we're to get on," broke in the whiskey importer, Rafferty, "if the trade between the two countries is to be interrupted. And, faith, that's what it means with a large

party of them. No one need tell me, for I see and hear it every day."

"Augh!" growled the chief magistrate; "I don't know nor care what it manes. Trade never was better all over the country, —never to my knowledge, than this year."

Never, indeed! The street leading to the chief of his Worship's public-houses was almost impassable at the moment he was speaking, owing to the crowd of drunken men and women who had just been turned out in obedience to the regulations, and who were brawling and staggering along the thoroughfare, making night hideous with their din.

"But throughout the country the feeling is intensely in favour of the movement?"

"Ay," rejoined the Lord Mayor carelessly; "but it's not so in Dublin, I can tell you."

"You're a Home Ruler, Mr. Hogan, ain't you?" asked a little wizened man, a wealthy salesmaster, whose hands had completely disappeared up his coat-sleeves.

But Hogan, to his delight, was prevented answering this question by the hostess, who led him up to one of the Misses Malowney,

and introduced him for the next dance. As they crossed the room, Hogan caught a glimpse of a face in the crowd which seemed familiar to him. It was that of a beautiful girl who was standing in a crowded corner. She looked at him, too, with a glance that had something of recognition in it. He puzzled himself for some minutes trying to think where it was he had seen her before. The floor was too crowded to dance with any pleasure, and he contrived to place himself and his partner at an angle where he could observe the young lady whose face caused him so much perplexity. She had fine brown hair, rippled, and with a dash of gold in it; blue eyes with dark lashes and pretty sweeping brows; an exquisite neck and shoulders. There was something distinguished in her appearance, as well as in her manner, which was excessively quiet and in no way self-conscious. High-coloured, dashing Miss Brangan, with her roving black eyes and furbelowed silk train, seemed to attract far more attention and observation, if not admiration.

Mrs. Rafferty, roaming about, on hospitable

cares intent, caught her nephew, Stanislas Mulcahy, by the arm, and whispered to him anxiously, "Stanislas, d'ye see Miss Davoren anywhere? I'm fairly dazzled, and me eyes is no good. Where is she at all? I'm afraid she hasn't danced yet."

"Over there by the door, do you see;— in white, leaning on her brother."

"I'm all right. Now, Mr. Malowney, allow me to get ye a nice partner for the next. She's a connection of Lord Rathbone. Come along o' me"; and taking that gentleman by the arm, Mrs. Rafferty advanced towards her guest with a solemn air. She was intensely impressed with the importance of the task she had undertaken. Mindful of the large sum of money the entertainment was to cost, she was consumed with anxiety lest anything should go wrong, any important guest be neglected, or any solecism, whether of behaviour or arrangements, be committed. She had taken all possible precautions; the list of guests was very satisfactory. The Lord Mayor and his family, and nearly all the Roman Catholic members of the Corporation, were present. The Lady Mayoress had opened the ball,

with the master of the house, just as she had done last Monday night at Mrs. Kelly's. More gentlemen than ladies had been invited; so there was no likelihood of complaints on the score of partners. Nearly all the eligible men of her set were present—some well-known doctors, for years looking out for heiresses,—dancing at every ball, promenading Grafton Street on week-days, and the Pier on Sundays,—most of them in debt, and all tolerably fast living,—putting off the day of retrenchment and economy until the rich heiress should turn up to make everything square, and bring them the connection which their own idleness and self-indulgence had prevented them making. Lawyers there were also, chiefly of the briefless variety, on the same errand bent; a few young men connected with Catholic legal functionaries, who were beyond Mrs. Rafferty's ken, and a few college boys brought by her nephew. Business men of every description formed the majority of the male division.

Then for girls there were the Misses Malowney,—Aloysia Margaretta and Augustina Eily, — “ beautifully educated ” and

gorgeously attired, who were of course the first in importance as the daughters of the Lord Mayor; then Miss Brangan, and a host of nieces, cousins, and connections generally. On the whole, Mrs. Rafferty felt that so far she could hold her own with the best of the ball-givers of her acquaintance. As for the supper, it had been ordered from the Lord Lieutenant's own caterer at so much a head, and she had no misgivings on that score. So she sailed about the room, pairing off the right couples together, taking care that the Misses Malowney got the most eligible of all the eligible young men, and that her own daughters came next in order of precedence. She was inclined to be gracious to Miss Davoren; so she brought her a very select partner in the person of Mr. Laurence Malowney, the Lord Mayor's eldest son.

The crowd was tremendous in the ball-room; it was quite impossible to dance; and after several attempts Hogan and his partner relinquished the endeavour, and got into a corner to wait for some of the couples to retire, and give them place.

"There are far too many," said Hogan; "we never could get through that crush." He was perfectly content to look at Miss Davoren; and he had at last recollected where he had met her—at the Convent last July.

"Yes," answered Miss Malowney, with a cross look at her flounces, a part of which had been carried off by a couple who had just plunged past. "It's nonsense to be askin' so many at once. However, that's the way now. Every one must be invited, or they'll only be offended. They ought to do like the Moores—give two balls, and divide the people that way."

"This is the only ball they give in the year, you see."

"I know; and it's a great mistake too. There's no comfort in going out at all now. There, see!"

Hogan looked in the direction indicated, and laughed at the elbowing and struggles of some half-dozen couples who seemed inextricably entangled.

Miss Malowney declined to risk another turn, and they took up their position by the wall. Hogan found it impossible to talk to

her: she was a heavy, stupid young woman; besides, he was engrossed in watching the frantic struggles of the dancers. Just opposite, Miss Davoren and her partner—a stout little man, who seemed terribly out of breath and heated—halted for a moment. Hogan thought he never saw any one so beautiful. She was very slender of figure and graceful in her movements; and when a great stout woman, dressed in crimson and yellow, stood for a minute beside her, it seemed to him as if a big full-blown peony had suddenly been contrasted with a delicate newly-opened jasmine star.

Meantime the dance went on: it was now about to stop; and those who had been despairingly waiting for the first batch to tire themselves out, dashed in recklessly. The scene became truly awful: shreds of tulle and gauze floated high above the heads of the dancers; somebody lost her head-dress; and a quantity of little muslin roses battered and dirtied beyond recognition were to be seen now and again in the gaps among the dancers. Miss Davoren resisted the earnest entreaties of her cavalier to risk the struggle; at last,

an unfortunate couple fell; the music ceased suddenly, and everybody crushed out and downstairs to the cool room on the landing.

Hogan wanted to secure Miss Davoren for a set of the Lancers just about to form; and to that end he looked around for his friend Mr. Mulcahy. Discovering him in a distant corner, he made towards him. "Want a partner, eh?" asked Mr. Mulcahy, divining his errand, and rising from his seat.

"Yes: that young lady in white yonder."

"Standing over by the lady in green, eh? Come along then;" and with an expression of unwillingness in his face which did not escape Hogan's eye, his friend led the way across the room.

"Mr. O'Rooney Hogan, Miss Davoren," muttered Mr. Mulcahy, and was gone, in obedience to a signal from his aunt. He bowed low and murmured the usual formula.

"I am engaged for this dance. Number five—the waltz? Yes, with pleasure; that is not engaged."

Then Mrs. Rafferty, who had her eye on our hero, and had no idea of allowing him to be monopolized by outsiders, came up, and led

him off to one of her own daughters. She happened to be engaged; but he had the tact to secure a quadrille with her later on, which restored Mrs. Rafferty's good-humour. A distant cousin of the house was next presented to him, and they made their way together to the dancing-room.

Having taken up a place at the sides, Hogan seeing Miss Brangan opposite, asked his partner who she was.

"A daughter of Alderman Brangan. She's only just out: she's very young." The lady spoke with the flattest Dublin brogue.

"Very fine girl indeed." Hogan remembered her now, and began to laugh at the reminiscence.

"Rather too stout," rejoined his partner, who, as one of Mr. Rafferty's poor relations, acted as a sort of jackal to her patronesses. Miss Brangan was a rival young lady, and consequently not to be praised with impunity by any eligible young gentleman.

"Who is the young lady in white?" he said, indicating Miss Davoren. He knew perfectly well already, but some sudden whim took him to hear what his partner would say of her.

"She's a Miss Davoren: her father's in the Castle,—very good family. Her mother was one of Lord Rathbone's connections."

"Ah! yes, indeed. Protestant, then?" he asked, with sudden and eager curiosity.

"No; her mother was, or is, I don't know which. She's clever, and sings, I'm told, beautifully. She has a lovely *ahzent*."

Hogan laughed outright at the tone of the encomium. "You seem to know everybody, Miss Doyle?" said he drily, turning, as he spoke, to survey the lady herself.

"Yes," she drawled carelessly. "Going out a great deal, one comes to know names and faces."

She evidently went out a great deal. Her face had the parboiled pasty colour and her eyes the dead look that late hours and excitement always give, and her hair was showing signs of over-frizzing and torturing. There was no guessing at her age: it might have been anything from four-and-twenty to eight-and-thirty. She was pious and gossiping, not too ill-natured, and, as Hogan divined, knew everybody and everything,—a sort of walking biographical cyclopædia, in short.

"Who is the little man dancing with the tall girl?"

"That's Mr. Alphonsus Kelly; and them two young gentlemen is his two brothers,—Paul Ferdinand and James Hubert. They're nephews of Mr. Rafferty's."

The dance was over. Hogan led his partner back to her seat: he was just in time to hear a whispered and eager conversation between Miss Brangan and one of the young ladies of the house. The next dance was a waltz, and as such of course belonged to the list of forbidden luxuries yclept "fast dances." Miss Brangan, as a *débutante*, was in a sad quandary; she bit her lips and frowned, and nibbled her pencil in mingled rage and incertitude. It really was no joke,—sixteen out of the twenty-four dances on the programme were "fast." And now was she to sit still all night during those sixteen dances because of a promise made to a certain Mother Paul some three months ago? It was perfectly dreadful. The piano, and the fiddle, and the French-horn on the balcony outside the back drawing-room window, were playing the "Invitation to the Waltz." And

as they played, her resolutions melted away.

"Eily!" she whispered imploringly to Miss Rafferty, "look, Eily! what 'll I do? I'll be sitting all night if I don't."

"That you will," replied Miss Eily, who "fast danced" herself. "There's very few quadrilles."

"But what 'll Mother Paul and Father M'Quaide say to me?"

"I am not going to fast dance," said the cousin whom Hogan had just taken back to her seat; "and Mary," she continued, with a voice of frigid virtue, "at your very first ball too, ye oughtn't to, now. I wouldn't."

"Augh there! Mary Doyle yourself, perhaps you're not asked," was the angry retort of Miss Rafferty, who did not want Miss Brangan, one of the *élite* of her guests, to be prevented in any way enjoying herself. "Look, Mary, there's Rose Malowney—and this is her first ball—going off with Doctor MacSwiggan, now!"

Miss Brangan seemed inclined to judge the case more by precedent than on its own merits, so to say. For she was looking all round

her eagerly to see who was going to set her an example of disobedience. Presently her eye fell on a couple who were moving in the direction of the dancing-room.

"Now, Eily!" she cried triumphantly, "there's Father M'Quaide's own niece, and the—ah—what's his name? I *will* do it."

"Very well, Mary—who will I get for you?"

"Whisper, Eily!" lowering her voice, "that young gentleman down there,—him with the lovely humbuggin' eyes, I mean."

"Oh, yes; that's young Mr. Davoren. I'll get him."

In a moment the couple were whirling round in the waltz, leaving Miss Doyle seated still on her sofa in all the consciousness of virtue, and wearing an expression of envy and scandalized prudery mingled on her face.

Hogan, who was standing with Miss Davoren close behind the group, heard and saw everything, and was almost convulsed with laughter.

"I am glad to see you are not troubled with scruples," said he, turning to her. "Isn't that awfully absurd?"

She was about to answer; but just then an opening appeared, and they swung lightly into

the whirling circle. After half a dozen rounds, they dropped out.

"Isn't it nonsense to forbid waltzes and galops? What on earth is the meaning of it?" he continued, looking at her admiringly as he spoke.

"I don't know, I'm sure. They seem to me to be all alike—quadrilles and the others. And after all, how *could* a ball be managed without dancing? Certainly it would not be appreciated by these people."

"Well, and about the theatre? What do you think of the theatre being forbidden, too?"

"I don't like the theatres at all. They are stupid and absurd: I mean the plays they're giving now. That prohibition would not affect me in the least. All the same, it is no use defying people; and I daresay the audiences have only increased. Perhaps a few ladies do stay away on account of the prohibition; but the gentlemen, you know, do what they please. I don't believe one of them has given up fast dancing."

Mr. Hogan laughed. "You don't see many of them at ten o'clock mass in the morning—eh?"

"Well, no; it would be strange if I did."

"Do you mean to say, Miss Davoren," said he, with affected solemnity, "that you don't go to ten o'clock mass every morning?"

"I do."

"May I be permitted to ask why?"

"For the same reason as the gentlemen," she replied.

He thought a second. "And that is——?"

"I have something else to do."

Here some couples quitted the dance, and they took a couple of rounds more.

"Suppose we go down and have an ice?" he proposed, as they quitted the room.

She assented, and they made their way down the stairs, which were crowded with sitters. The tea-room was now turned into an ice-room; huge crystal pitchers were filled with iced drinks, and blocks of ice and ferns made the air seem delightfully fresh in contrast to that of the rooms above.

They seated themselves in a window.

"Don't you think balls a mistake?" asked he.

"There are more enjoyable sorts of entertainment, I fancy," she replied.

"We have got into the way of thinking here that there is no other mode of enjoying society. In fact, the social system seems to depend wholly on ball-giving. Horribly expensive notion it is, to be sure," he added, glancing round.

"Decidedly expensive, I should think," she assented.

"A little more conversation, and a little less fierce dancing, some good music, and a less costly entertainment altogether; a few artistic, literary people, instead of——" a motion of his head towards Lady Shanassy. "Is that your idea, Miss Davoren?"

"I confess that my ideal is something like that," returned she. "But it is utterly impracticable."

"Well, you see, fashion has decided in favour of these big squashes. Now, these people may give a Sunday dinner; and after Easter a smaller edition of this; then for the rest of the year they will have not as much as a tea party."

"That is a stupid way of doing," rejoined Miss Davoren. "My cousins in Paris tell me that every evening they can go to a friend's

house, uninvited, or have people with themselves, but all without one sou of expense for dress or entertainment."

"It wouldn't be practicable here. Men won't go out unless they are fed. The Mooneys' ball, last Thursday, failed for want of men; and the reason was the supper had not been up to the mark on a previous occasion."

"Well, of course it looks—er—unrefined," said Miss Davoren, laughing; "but really, to dance from ten till four without ceasing is exhausting work. And at those Parisian houses I know there is a great deal of music, parlour games, and that sort of thing."

"It would be infinitely preferable to this," said he, "were it only feasible."

"It used to be supposed that ladies made society to their wishes. I mean, everything was conformable to their tastes. It is not so now, is it?" she asked.

"My dear Miss Davoren, that was in the old time, before the era of the convent school-girls. I know," he interposed, "that I am speaking to a young lady of most liberal culture. You must observe for yourself how very uninformed those young ladies are in every

way. They can't talk on any subject. Some one I know says it takes five years for them to get over the bread-and-butterism they bring home from school with them. When a girl leaves an English finishing school she is always fit for the duties of a drawing-room."

"There is something to be said for as well as against our system," she said.

"Oh, of course. But if our rulers admit that there is to be society at all, why not go in for it intelligently and rationally?"

"By our rulers, do I understand you to mean the priests? What have they to do with educating us girls? I assure you girls learn at school just what their parents are able to pay for; and above all, just what is most likely to please—the gentlemen."

"Ah, ah!" said Hogan, noticing her sarcastic tone and smile; "and now tell me what are the *branches*—is that the term?—that please the gentlemen? Antimacassars? piano playing?"

"I don't know much about gentlemen's tastes; but you know, of course, it is said that in every country women are educated up to

the level of the men's requirements, not beyond."

"And *their* requirements," retorted he, "are determined by *their* education. Now, who educate us in this country, and so fix the standard, eh? You see we revolve in a vicious circle."

"Hadn't we better go upstairs again?" said Miss Davoren, replying only by a look to the barrister's daring speech.

Hogan returned to the aldermanic group on the hearthrug, and was speedily engaged in discussion with the dignitaries who formed it. He declined dancing as much as possible, except when it was with the daughters of the hostess or of the Lord Mayor; and when supper was announced, was deputed to the honourable post of convoying Lady Shanassy down, directly after the Lady Mayoress. After that dowager had taken in her supplies, and was replaced on her sofa, Hogan hastened to secure Miss Davoren, and carried her to a corner of the supper-room, now thronged with hungry people.

The supper was in keeping with the rest of the entertainment; everything in strict ac-

cordance with the precedent set by the last Castle entertainment. Soup was no longer in fashion, so there was none. Cold fish was the rage, and hot meat; so an enormous salmon was at the foot of the table, and hot roast game to be found everywhere. Pink jellies and fruit jellies were the last novelties; and champagne, that *sine quâ non* of modern entertainments, was to be heard popping on all sides.

At the top of the room there seemed to be some unusual noise and loud talking; for a while the clatter of plates and popping of champagne corks drowned it; but at last there came a general lull, and a clear English voice was heard in altercation with one of the servant-men. The master of the house, who was just entering with a fat dowager on his arm, planted her in a chair, and straight-way marched up to the scene of action. A very young, fair-haired man was holding a bottle in his hand, and trying to force another from the man-servant's grasp. Mr. Rafferty asked who the youth was, but no one could tell him. His nephew Mulcahy came up, and whispered that he had seen him enter the

drawing-room at one o'clock, unannounced. Hogan caught Mulcahy by the sleeve, and informed him that it was one of the Lord Lieutenant's aides-de-camp, named Wyldoates, an officer of the Dragoon Guards.

"I'll settle him," said the irate host; and stepping up to the half-tipsy lad, he asked, determinedly and pompously,—

"Mr. Wyldoates, kindly inform me to what cause I may assign the honour of your presence here."

Mr. Wyldoates leisurely finished his glass of champagne.

"You—aw—have the advantage over me—aw—old fellow."

"I have," was the reply. At a look from the speaker, Mulcahy seized hold of the intruder's arm, and the servant and his uncle assisting, the aide-de-camp was speedily deposited outside the hall door, minus his hat, which he did not return to claim.

The *contretemps* lasted only a second, and the business of supper-eating was speedily resumed—plates rattled, knives and forks jingled, as if nothing had occurred.

"Tell me," asked Miss Davoren, who had

turned very pale during the *fracas*, "is that a specimen of English finish?"

Hogan laughed.

"That's a mere boy; you must not be hard on him. Mr. Rafferty will have an abject apology to-morrow morning; it's just some messroom wager. Officers, you know," shrugging his shoulders; "one can't expect anything else from them!"

"They are expected to be gentlemen, at all events," retorted she; "but the Guards, you are aware, consider themselves on foreign duty in Dublin, so they don't care how they behave to us aborigines."

"Now, now, I hardly think that," replied he, unconsciously taking the part of apologist. He was holding her plate as he spoke, standing before her. "You are a patriot, I fear, Miss Davoren. Of course you are."

"I am not exactly a patriot; but I must confess to a tinge, a very little tinge, of it," she added, in a jesting tone. "What would become of us all—of our energies and intellects—if we were not given to politics and patriotism? There isn't any other outlet for either, as things are."

"How 'as things are,' now?" asked he, with a look of seriousness and attention different from his previous manner.

"Do I need to tell you that?"—looking up into his face. "This country is so cut off from the other nations of Europe,—for it is a nation, in spite of geography, ethnology, and all the rest of it. Thanks to our rulers, we have no manufactures to employ our time; and then, worst of all, these wretched castes of Protestant and Catholic hinder so ——"

A look on her listener's face warned the speaker to stop. She bit her lip, frightened lest she had said too much.

"Do you say that our religion, then," said he, watching her face closely, "does not allow any outlet for intellect or energy?"

"I don't say that," she replied hastily; "taking our disabilities into account, we could, I think, show as fair an average of intellectual achievement as any other creed."

"*'Taking our disabilities into account!'*" Miss Davoren, were I inclined, I could turn that proposition against you nicely."

But Miss Davoren chose not to notice what

he said, and turned off the matter by asking him for a glass of water.

Then they returned to the drawing-room. On the lobby stood her brother : he advanced to resume his guardianship of her ; and she, turning towards Hogan, said, by way of dismissal,—

“ This is my brother, Mr. Hogan.”

Designedly or not, he chose to take it as an introduction, and held out his hand to the lad, saying pleasantly that he was glad to make his acquaintance.

The college boy was a little flattered, for he knew Hogan by repute ; and they entered into conversation cordially. Miss Davoren was carried off by one of her partners.

“ You have to go out of town to-night ? ” asked Hogan of her brother.

“ I have to go out to Green Lanes. We live there ; but my sister is to stay in Fitzgerald Place.”

“ Do you live in college ? ” asked Hogan.

“ No ; wish I did. It’s such a bore to have to go in and out such a distance every day.”

The tone made Hogan laugh. He guessed pretty accurately it was not the trouble of

coming in from Green Lanes daily that bored the young gentleman.

"Do you belong to the football club, Mr. Davoren?"

"I do."

"Do you know Mahoney Quain?"

"Yes;"—this with a laugh. "That's a nice boy. I'm going to the opera with him to-morrow night. He's got a song for the top gallery that 'll make a sensation."

"I'm going also," said Hogan, "and I must look out for that. What's the opera?"

"I don't know: I ain't fond of music. Do you know who that beggar was that kicked up the shindy below-stairs?—an aide-de-camp, I heard."

"It was an aide-de-camp and an officer of the Guards, I believe."

"Infernal cad," was young Davoren's comment. "He thinks he's paying the place a compliment."

"So he was," interpolated another collegian, Mr. Orpen. "I never saw such a shop in my existence, Dicky. Look at that girl over there. Did you ever see a little dog with his tail curled up so stiff on his back that

his leg had sort of gone up with it, and he walked lame? Now she's got her hair drawn up so tight and stiff, her eyebrows are gone up with it. Look. I bet you my life she couldn't wink, to save her soul. Are they all whiskey people, Dicky?" continued the critic. "You don't hear these old buffers talking of anything else."

"They're not giving you whiskey to drink, Orpen."

"No; I'll allow the champagne is genuine. Supper's A 1, certainly."

"Very well, Orpen. You know that's what you came for," returned young Davoren.

"I think, young gentlemen, that we're expected to dance for our suppers; so come along into the room," said Hogan, leading the way back. And the trio were speedily absorbed into a quadrille just forming.

Hogan by no means intended to distinguish any particular young lady by his attentions. He knew that a very little flirtation goes a long way with the chattering dowagers and chaperons, whose occupation in a ball-room is to watch and chronicle all such occurrences; and he did not want his name brought into any

of their debates. At the same time he was considerably smitten by the beauty of Nellie Davoren; in fact, she had made on him a very deep impression. Guarded as he tried to be, his eyes, in spite of himself, followed her in the dance, and his partner's conversation fell unheeded, save for monosyllabic replies, on his ears. He had danced twice with her already, and had taken her down to supper, and before that to the refreshment-room. He wondered if he might not risk another waltz. A good half-dozen or more dances still remained; and he prudently resolved to divide them between the Rafferty girls and the Malowneys. Then nobody could be witty at his expense.

So he first inscribed their names on his card, and then walked over to her, and cut out Mr. Orpen, who, bent on the same mission, arrived simultaneously. She was almost about to refuse him, saying she did not wish to remain longer; but he managed to induce her, and they moved arm in arm to the dancing-room. She waltzed well, and Hogan felt himself fully repaid for the five sacrifices he considered himself to have made.

After-supper waltzes are peculiarly delightful:

there is a swing in the music, and a lightness and exhilaration in the dancers, that make the interval between that event and the breaking-up the most enjoyable part of the whole entertainment. Hogan did not waltz very badly. He was indeed a little stiff, and looked rather too much at the ceiling; but he was light, and kept good time; and Miss Davoren was one of those dancers who carry themselves instead of making their partners feel their whole burden. They spun round utterly unconscious of everything but the delight of their own harmonious motion. The musicians played the "Wiener Tänzen" in capital time. A large detachment was downstairs at supper; so the floor was not too crowded, and Nellie and Hogan enjoyed a thoroughly good waltz. They drew up breathless at last.

"That's the most delightful waltz I ever had in my life," said he in a tone meant to be significant, and which was certainly sincere. "What a pity it must be the last!" And he looked down straight into her eyes.

She smiled, but turned away her head.

"Miss Davoren, please tell me are you to be at Mrs. Maldoon's on Friday night?"

"No."

"No? Then neither shall I."

"Oh, how absurd! Were you really going, now?" and she looked up laughingly into his face.

He took a card out of his pocket, and showed it to her.

"I shan't go, because you are not to be there. Will you go and hear Father O'Hea at Gardiner Street on Sunday?"

"Possibly Dicky may take me."

There was not much encouragement in the tone, but the young man determined he would be there too; and on relinquishing her, he whispered to her brother to return after depositing his sister in Fitzgerald Place, and he would give him a lift on his way home.

It was not long before the youth returned; and, Orpen joining them, they donned overcoats and mufflers, and sallied forth cigars in mouths.

Mr. Orpen was indignant and disgusted, or pretended to be both.

"I didn't know a creature in the place," he

grumbled, "give you my word. What the deuce did the people mean by askin' us to such a shop? Dav., did you notice the Lord Mayor—old whiskey barrels—with his chain of office round his neck? Law!" continued the young gentleman, after an explosion of laughter, "why hadn't the aldermen got on their gowns?"

"I didn't mind him so much," returned Mr. Davoren; "it was her ladyship took my eye. I was dancing with some girl who called on me to admire her 'joolery' (jewellery)."

"I wonder will the aide-de-camp get in a row for his lark to-night?" said Hogan.

"By Jove, I expect so. Of course those people will write a complaint to the Castle about him: only too glad of the chance. Beggars!"

"Not at all," put in Hogan quickly. "Rafferty knows more than that. He kicked him out; and that's quite punishment enough, I fancy."

"What a capital lark it was!" grinned Mr. Orpen, approvingly. "That Wyldoates is game for anything. What a joke he'll have over t o-morrow!"

"I hope he's game for a new hat. I saw his under the hall table just now," said Dicky, who did not look on the insolent aggression in the same light that his friend did—namely, as a pleasant novelty in the way of practical jokes.

"Where have you to go?" asked Hogan of Orpen, seeing a car approach.

"Close to Charlemont Demesne," replied he.

"I'll drop you. Get up, Mr. Davoren;" and all three drove off.

CHAPTER III.

“The head of a petty corporation, who opposes the designs of a prince who would tyrannically force his subjects to save their best clothes for Sundays; the young pedant who finds one undiscovered property in the polype, or describes an unheeded process in the skeleton of a mole, and whose mind, like his microscope, perceives nature only in detail; the rhymers, who make smooth verses and paint to our imagination, when he should only speak to our hearts; all equally fancy themselves walking forward to immortality, and desire the crowd behind them to look on.”—*Goldsmith*.

MISS DAVOREN's cousin, Dorothy O'Hegarty, sat in a sunny bay-windowed parlour of Fitzgerald Place, waiting breakfast for her young relative. The wintry November sun shone in, lighting up the silver on the breakfast table, and brightening the grim visage of Desmond O'Hegarty, staring with hard grey eyes from his gilt frame over the sideboard. Everything in the room was bright and burnished; the carpet, an old well-worn Brussels, was brushed to perfection; the breakfast-cloth

was spotless ; you might see yourself mirrored in the heavy old plate that decked the table and sideboard, and the fireplace was nothing short of a picture. Seated with her slippers on the edge of the fender, reading with gold spectacles on nose the fashionable intelligence in her favourite Tory paper, Miss Dorothy herself deserves a passing word of description. Tall and thin, not to say angular, with round, hard, grey eyes and bushy eyebrows, she had a good nose, in profile,—it was rather sharp at the point,—strong white teeth, and a weak chin. Like most of her country-people, the upper portion of her face was the best : from the upper lip down, few Irish faces are well moulded. There is a peculiar look, as if of a squeeze, about the chin that is easily distinguished. She had a broad forehead and thick grey hair,—on the whole a rather handsome and uncommon physiognomy, but stamped with hardness, and unmistakably cynical.

Miss O'Hegarty had quite finished the list of names at Lord Brayhead's dinner, when the door opened and Nellie entered, fresh as a rose, and without a trace of headache or lassitude—blessed privilege of *débutantes*—after her

night's dancing. Her hair was not dressed,—that is, it was not plaited up in the hideous unnatural-sized braids of the day; merely rolled up in a coil at the back, and drawn tightly off her brows, it showed the beautiful Greek outline of the head; and a hundred tiny transparent ringlets clustered at the nape of her neck, and swayed with every breath upon her temples. A clear fair forehead, and eyes as limpid and soft as a May morning,—truly, as yet, Nellie was a day beauty. The bright shell-pink that the gaslights of the night before had not been able to set forth now glowed upon her cheeks, which then had seemed too pale.

As the door opened Miss O'Hegarty dropped the paper and spectacles into her lap.

"Now, child, good morning. Are you rested? No one would imagine you had been dancing all night. Perhaps you were not;—you were a wallflower, hey?" and she laughed ironically.

"Not altogether, Cousin Dorothy," said Nellie, laughing as she rubbed her hands at the fire.

"Well, well," said Dorothy, pouring out tea, "come and take your breakfast, and tell us all about it. Whom had you there?"

"We had a delightful ball; really, cousin, I enjoyed it so much. And there was the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, and Alderman Brangan, and——"

"Why, you had everybody of note," interrupted Miss O'Hegarty sarcastically; "come now, tell your conquests: one of the Malowneys, I hope? They're rich, you know."

Nellie permitted herself a little curl of her upper lip. "Really, I only danced a few times with the Malowneys."

"A few times!—that wasn't bad, altogether," commented the old lady.

"There was also Mr. Mulcahy, one of Dicky's friends, and a Mr. O'Rooney Hogan."

"O'Rooney Hogan!—who's that?"

"I don't know, Cousin; he's a barrister, and very gentlemanlike indeed. Somebody said he was a nephew of Bishop O'Rooney."

"Oh! one of your own people, then. I think I've seen his name in the papers."

"He's quite a rising young man, and I heard somebody say won't be long until he gets into Parliament."

"Ha, indeed: To be sure, that's what all those creatures go for nowadays." Miss

Dorothy was looking over the column of births and deaths for any familiar names. Not finding any, she resumed.

"Who was the belle? or how many of them were there?"

"There was a great tall black-haired girl,—a Miss Dorney, from Galway; but I did not like her dress."

"Galway! Dorney? Tush! that's not a Galway name," said Miss O'Hegarty scornfully. If there was one thing more than another that she prided herself on, it was her knowledge of the generic names and habitats of the Irish country gentry. Given a name, she could place and classify it with as unerring sagacity as an Owen or a Lyell would an antediluvian claw or tooth.

"You have no beauties among your set, Nellie," continued the old lady, just in the tone she might use in discussing the habits and peculiarities of a Central African tribe. "Anyhow, not among the Dublin lot. They're all overfed and underbred;" and she chuckled at the neat antithesis. "All as like as bullets cast in the same mould. I don't know what does it. Letitia O'Rourke now, poor thing,

she was ladylike and refined—had a real air of civilization about her; but her daughters, how or why I never could make out, were coarse-looking, clumsy, unfinished, and all of them with such accents! It's those convent schools."

"It must be the mixture, for they're really all mixed," said Nellie; "and then you know there are far more Catholics of the common class than the other."

"I know it. That's just it. They're all new tradespeople, and of course they swamp the upper element altogether. It must be so in their schools, even more so than in society—their own society, I mean; and that accounts for the commonness of all the young R.C.s now. I declare I've often been puzzled to know how it is the rising generation are so inferior to their parents. It's all this frightful irruption of trade. Shoddy, my dear; it's shoddy."

"Well, but I am sure the nuns are all nice and ladylike; they do their best, and really you can't——"

"'You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.' No, I suppose not, poor things; but

after all, Nellie, the nuns are the very same themselves. Don't tell me. Dooly, my butcher, had his daughter enter a convent the other day, and his sister is in one. Ah! to be sure."

"Very well, Cousin Dolly,—if they're able to pay for it, why not?—their money is as good as anybody else's; and no matter who they were, I never met a nun that was not nice."

"No, it isn't, it's made by cheating; and as for Dooly, he is charging me a shilling a pound this minute, while he's paying the farmers not the one-third of that price for their beasts; he's in a ring to make a hundred per cent., like those vile coal people; and traders who go on like that, of course may make their children into nuns and priests, and all that's grand, and give balls to three hundred if they like. All I say is, don't ask me to have anything to do with them, for I abhor them. Pah!"

"Ah! now, Cousin Dorothy, what can you mean? And there were no butchers nor coal people there last night. They were nice enough, and very good-natured."

"No, you hadn't butchers; but you had

salesmasters, and that's not much better ; and if you hadn't coal people, you had whiskey people—wholesale or retail, or both."

"Come now, Cousin Dorothy, will you tell me if you object to meeting Lady Plutus Grains and Mrs. Trebblex,—and pray what are they?"

"They are ladies of family and fortune,—aristocrats who have married men of fortune : that's all, Miss."

"Well, Mrs. Malowney's only fault is, then, that she is——

"Mrs. Malowney,—you don't know what you are talking about, child." Miss Dorothy cut Nellie short with an air of superiority.

"How was she dressed, by-the-bye?"

Miss Davoren proceeded to describe the dress at length ; and her relative laughed heartily.

"The daughters, of course, were to match," chuckled she, "were they not?"

"No ; they were dressed in rather good taste, but very richly."

"Well, you know, Tims does that for them. They may buy Paris dresses ; but figure and style, thank goodness, that is not in the market yet."

"I must go home now, Cousin. Do you want anything? Mamma has been by herself since early yesterday."

"Well, you had better take care not to excite her by telling her too much of all your fine doings. I met Surgeon Graham last week, and you know he is particular about her being kept quiet."

"I'll take care, Cousin Dorothy."

"And see here, Nellie,"—here Miss Dorothy hesitated an instant,—“Nellie! I have an afternoon tea on Monday, and if you like to come over for it, do; but mind, there will be nobody but a pack of old women and some few young ones, or rather would-be young ones—no men, Nellie; and if there were, none for you—remember that, child. I set my face altogether against mixed marriages; no good can come of them. Marry in your own set, or don't marry at all, *I* say; but, if you *will* marry, gild your pill,—some rich wholesale dealer, or great stack of a tea-man that can keep you a carriage and pair. I always think of the maxim, ‘Repentance is easiest in a coach and four.’ Heigh-ho!”

And Miss O'Hegarty, who was perfectly serious, sighed a little absently, and leaving the breakfast table, mounted her feet again on the fender preparatory to finishing her paper.

Nellie assented gladly, for she never before had been invited by her cousin to any of these festivities, and she was curious to meet the guests, some of whom had been friends of her mother's before she had married and given up society. Nellie's mother had been ward and niece of Desmond O'Hegarty, Miss Dorothy's father; and she had lived with him until she fell in love with, and married, Mr. Davoren. A long estrangement ensued on this step; but gradually the old friendship had been renewed, and had lasted since the birth of her first child, Nellie.

CHAPTER IV.

“And experience showeth, there are few men so true to themselves and so settled; but that sometimes upon heat, sometimes upon bravery, sometimes upon kindness, sometimes upon trouble of mind and weakness, they open themselves; specially if they be put to it with a counter dissimulation according to the proverb of Spain, ‘*Di mentira y sacaras verdad*,’ Tell a lie and find a truth.”—*Bacon*.

MR. COSMO SALTASCHE possessed a first-floor office in a fine building in Dame Street, not very far from College Green. It comprised three apartments: two large rooms, and a smaller one at the back, which was fitted up, although but seldom used, as a bedroom by the owner. One of the other two was devoted to his clerks; his own office was a splendid, lofty room, dingy enough as to paint and paper, but furnished with fine desks and plenty of softly cushioned morocco chairs. A long leather-covered table stood in the middle of the room; share lists, prospectuses, and blue books, with reports in various languages, filled this. Maps

of estates and railways hung on the walls. Two fine windows commanded a view of Dame Street and College Green, with their motley crowds. Standing in one of these, leisurely stroking his chin and looking out towards Westmoreland Street, was the owner.

Mr. Saltasche, the grandson of a French *émigré*, was now somewhat over forty years of age; short, but not of the shortness that would entitle him to be spoken of as "a little man." His face was handsome: he had large brown eyes full of intelligence, an aquiline nose, and determined mouth and chin. His foreign pedigree asserted itself in the clear olive of his skin and silky fineness of his hair.

If you were told of it, and looked for it, a certain resemblance was discernible between him and the first Napoleon; and it was doubtless with the object of helping out this resemblance, on which he prided himself enormously, that Mr. Saltasche shaved so scrupulously every vestige of hair off his face, and always wore the whitest of vests and wide turned-down collars. A capital actor and mimic, and a finished linguist,

although not a classical scholar, he was considered to be a most accomplished gentleman. A long residence on the Continent had given him a knowledge of men and women that was of immense use to him; and his easy, suave manners, joined to the advantages of wealth, obtained for him an intimate footing in the highest circles in Dublin. "All things to all men" seemed to be his device, for he was as intimate and congenial with Viscount Rames, the turfite, as with Lord Brayhead, the champion of the Church party and patron of every proselytising institution in the kingdom.

Mr. Saltasche's religious creed was evidently a liberal one, for he had been known to attend a morning meeting for the christianizing or evangelization of Rome, and the evening of the same day had been seen to stroll arm-in-arm with gentle, amiable Monsignor Bursford, formerly private secretary to His Holiness, and now parish priest of Green Lanes, through the grounds of his own home, Vevey House, or along the shaded high-roads. To Monsignor Bursford, who since his conversion had spent his life in Italy, a chat

with his versatile neighbour over old times in Naples or Florence was a delightful treat. Saltasche knew every by-way of Europe. Every picture, every statue was familiar to him. He could tell you everything you needed to know—from the best hotel to the best shop where to buy a bonnet.

Such a man must have enemies ; and in the body at large of Dublin society Saltasche had not a few. Most of the number were jealous of his success and prosperity. Some distrusted his silky ways ; many were envious of his intimacy with the great folks, and puzzled their heads to know what could be the “open sesame” by which this insignificant nobody of a stock-broker penetrated the enchanted circle. Lord Ramines was known to be involved—so the explanation of his intimacy was of course not far to seek. But Lord Brayhead was a psalm-singing fanatic ; and this fellow, who, it was notorious, believed in nothing, human or divine, must have bewitched him. He was not a marrying man, and was in consequence by no means favourably regarded by women with flocks of

marriageable daughters. There was an expression in Saltasche's face, when he was off his guard (which was very seldom), that reminded one somewhat of a tiger; showing unmistakably that under the gloss of training and worldly usage was a powerful, unprincipled, and passionate mind,—that of a man capable of risking all on the turn of a card, and toppling down with one sweep the edifice that had cost years of patient scheming and plotting to rear. There was something of the Buonaparte nature in him, and in audacity and self-confidence at least, he was perhaps equal in his own way to that greatest of adventurers. His fault was a love of pleasure and self-indulgence; and on more than one occasion his lapses had nearly been his ruin. Any other man would have been swamped, but Saltasche's resources and impudence were overwhelming, and floated him over everything.

Lounging in the window was in no way congenial to him; and after some five minutes spent in looking up and down the street, he stamped his foot impatiently, and returned to his desk. He lifted a sheet of paper which

was lying loosely on the blotting-book, and read a pencilled memorandum : “ ‘ Mr. Brangan and the gas companies at half-past two : and I must be on ‘Change at three.’ What can this fool mean ? ” The office clock pointed to five minutes past two, and Mr. Saltasche returned to his post of observation. In a minute or two a pleased expression came over his face. A brotigham with a coronet on the panels, drawn by a pair of job horses, crossed the front of the Bank ; and in a few moments a tall angular-looking old man entered the office.

“ I am a little late, Mr. Saltasche,” he said, in an explanatory rather than apologetic tone, laying his hat on a chair as he spoke.

“ Pray don’t speak of it,” returned the stockbroker, pulling round an easy chair and seating himself with his back to the light. After a few common-place remarks, his visitor, who seemed fidgety and uneasy, plunged headlong into his subject.

“ I have been wanting to see you on a very particular business. You know the railway to Leadmines ? ” The stockbroker bowed assent. “ Well, I wanted that railroad to be run a

good two miles closer to my estate. See,"—and as he spoke he unrolled a chart which he took from his pocket,—“the boundaries are here; and on this side is a valuable quarry of splendid granite, worth—oh! a fortune, Mr. Saltasche. I offered the railway company as much granite as they wanted at a merely nominal price, on condition of course, you understand, that they complied with my wishes in the laying of the road. I offered, also, to assist them with my interest—very great, as you are aware—in getting their Bill through Parliament. But, no: they refused; influenced by those of whom it were useless to speak now. Hem!”

“I understand you, my lord, perfectly.” Saltasche fixed his eyes on the chart, waiting for more.

“It is now my purpose to start a railway from Dublin to a point beyond Leadmines. The farmers, my tenants, will benefit enormously by it; and those magnificent granite and slate quarries will be at last practicable. Er—the forming of a company is one of the branches which I shall confide to you; but the getting the Bill through Parliament will be, I

apprehend, troublesome. We may expect opposition."

"Doubtless. That once disposed of, the rest would be quite easy."

"Well, it is necessary to look ahead in these matters. This Bill will be read for the first time next session. My friends have secured a day for it; but I fear, unless some precautions are taken, it will fail. I certainly could not spare a single one of my supporters in the House. And to-day I am told that an old friend of mine who represented Lord Kilboggan's family seat for years in Parliament is in very bad health. In fact—ah—he writes to me that his physician has recommended total abstinence from all public duty; he has gone to the south of France, and I may feel justified in saying that his resignation is imminent." And fixing his gold spectacles on his nose, Lord Brayhead stared with a woe-begone expression at the broker.

"And Lord Kilboggan's nominee for the seat may be——"

"With Lord Kilboggan I have nothing to say or to do in common, I thank the Lord. I

trust I remember him in my prayers ; but, Mr. Saltasche, he is a godless man, who would not scruple to injure me in any way he could ; and if he were aware that I had any interest in the election for Peatstown he would oppose me."

Saltasche, who was dying to laugh at the idea of his lordship praying for the ungodly Kilboggan, instantly answered :

"Nothing would be easier than to find a candidate for any vacant seat your lordship may think of. But then, as things are, it must be some Home Ruler ; and—ah—hum—somebody agreeable to the priests. In fact, my lord, it is with them that you would have to treat. Moreover, as to money, you must be prepared to guarantee part, or all your man's expenses."

"I do not object to Home Rule, Mr. Saltasche. The Government has forfeited its title to our——"

"Certainly, my lord," interrupted Saltasche skilfully. He dreaded a discourse on the iniquities of disestablishment. "But your Bill is to be read. Mr. Wyldoates had obtained permission, I think ; and——"

"It was to have been brought in early in the next session," groaned his lordship.

"That would be after Christmas. It must only be postponed," said the broker, speaking rapidly and with his sharp eyes fixed on his client's face.

"As to a candidate selected or approved by the priests, do you think, Mr. Saltasche," asked the noble Churchman, his countenance presenting a diverting mixture of perplexity and disgust, "that the state of the country is such that we cannot avoid by some means that very annoying dilemma?"

"Candidly, my lord, I do not. Moreover, if a re-election be necessary, you cannot pick and choose. Of course your name must be kept out of the affair completely."

"That is why I came to you, Mr. Saltasche," said his lordship helplessly, "to talk it over. I cannot appear. I am a Conservative and a Churchman."

"It would be awkward, certainly," assented his friend, who thoroughly enjoyed the intrigue, and appreciated the position of the spiteful old wretch consenting to forego his principles, religious and political, in order

to have his revenge against the railway magnates who had thwarted his schemes for money-making.

"You will make inquiries as to a probable candidate, the cost, etcetera, and come and dine with me, and we can talk it over. I can rely, of course, on your discretion?" said the nobleman, rising from his chair, and beginning to shuffle to the door.

"You may, my lord," returned the stock-broker, with a triumphant smile, rising to show his distinguished client downstairs.

A moment after the brougham and the job horses had rolled away, Mr. Saltasche was on an outside car, driving down the quays as fast as possible. At the corner of a street near the Four Courts he saw O'Rooney Hogan nodding to him. He returned the salutation mechanically as he passed; but, as if a sudden thought struck him, turned his head and looked back keenly after the young man's retreating figure.

"Where the deuce did he tell me he lived?" thought he.

CHAPTER V.

“So gib mir auch die Zeiten wieder
Da ich noch selbst im Werden war,
Da sich ein Quell gedrängter Lieder
Ununterbrochen neu gebar ;
Da Nebel mir die Welt verhüllten,
Die Knospe Wunder noch versprach,
Da ich die Tausend Blumen brach,
Die alle Thäler reichlich füllten.
Ich hatte nichts, und doch genug,
Den Drang nach Wahrheit und die Lust am Trug.
Gib ungebändigt jene Triebe,
Das tiefe, schmerzenvolle Glück,
Des Hasses Kraft, die Macht der Liebe,
Gib meine Jugend mir zurück.”

Faust.

ABOUT five miles out of Dublin is a place called Green Lanes, a tolerably select suburban village, consisting of one main street lying close to the railway station, and which comprised the usual shops and groggeries, the post-office, and lending library. Branching off this main street were dirty, frowzy lanes, peopled by slatternly women and children, where pigs routed at their own

sweet wills, and hens, as demoralised and down-at-heel of appearance as their owners, sunned themselves and excavated their clay baths under the road walls. Leading down to the village, and from it in various directions, were wide high-roads, well planted and bordered by eight-foot stone walls, muddy and dreary now to look at, on a late November afternoon. Great elms and knotty ashes stretched their bare limbs across in wintry greeting to each other; and here and there the long grey stretch of demesne wall was broken by an entrance gate overgrown with ivy, or a narrow grated door which gave the passer-by a glimpse of the sea view from which the jealous proprietor had so carefully excluded him. Scarce a house was visible, most of the mansion residences being hidden away as far from the thoroughfare as the extent of their grounds would permit, or cunningly placed at such an angle as to be veiled from the eyes of such curious persons as might chance to look in the gate-ways. Tall shrubberies of Scotch firs and laurels made evergreen tufts pleasant to the sight amid the wintry desolation now reigning around.

At a corner of one of these roads, where another avenue—also leading, but by a more circuitous route, to the village—joins it, stood in an enclosed space a queer old gabled house, with a yard in front flanked by high white walls with crenated parapets. A huge wooden gate, the pillars of which were surmounted by griffins sadly the worse for time and weather, gave admission to a large gravelled square. The front of the house was quite overgrown with creepers, which stretched their long bare arms round the latticed windows, and held even the topmost chimneys fast in their dry and thorny embrace. At this winter season they were hardly an ornament. Sparrows had built in the jessamine; and their abandoned nests, matted and unsightly tufts of straw and leaves, hung to the gables. Large tubs, painted green, held aloes, and stood in a stiff row across the gravelled square. A tiled walk led up from the gate; and a wicker paling, also overgrown with rose trees and creepers, divided the garden and out-offices from the front. Old-fashioned pointed windows, with queer little lattice panes, and tall stacks of chimney-pots, one-half of which were

abandoned to the jackdaws, gave the white house a queer old-world look.

It was about three in the afternoon; a November sun was sending 'pale yellow rays through the elm branches, and lighting up the window-panes of the room where Nellie sat at work. Dressed in a plain black gown, the girl looked even better than in her ball-room bravery. The ivory contour of her neck appeared to advantage circled round with the dull black, and the tints of her hair and eyes seemed more brilliant for the dark relief. Her mother lay sleeping close by, and as the sunlight was rapidly drawing round to a point where it must fall upon the invalid's face, Nellie gently pulled down the blind, and then, having remembered a task downstairs, laid aside her sewing and glided noiselessly out of the room.

Catching sight of 'her brother in the garden from a lobby window as she passed, she went out to speak to him. The garden looked a wilderness. A few late chrysanthemums still lingered by the walls, and a pale bleached monthly rose showed its straggly petals from the hedge. The beds had been lately cleared of the refuse of the summer flowers. Blue

lobelias, their tiny blossoms sadly faded, and white and red foliage plants were heaped here and there. The clay had a black and newly-turned look; the ivy on the walls looked a vivid green in contrast. Down at the end was the kitchen garden and tool-house; and here Dicky, seated on a water-can, among broken pots, compost heaps, and piles of dead leaves, was busy driving nails into a wheelbarrow which he had just broken. He was tall, as we said before, and had long handsome features, pretty fair hair, and eyes like his sister's, only lacking her steadiness of look. He was a pretty, interesting lad, clever beyond all doubt, but idle and wild. His escapades were condoned by many people on account of his pleasing, winning manner; and it certainly was difficult to refuse him anything he asked. He had recently taken a good place at the entrance examination of Trinity College, and he found plenty of congenial spirits in that abode of learning to help him in mischief.

He looked up when he saw his sister coming down the path, and after selecting a conveniently-sized pebble to throw at the house-cat, Tib, who was following her with stealthy foot-

steps, and between whom and himself there existed the bitterest of feuds, resumed his hammering with deafening assiduity.

Nellie, who knew with whom she had to deal, waited patiently, wrapping up her hands in her apron. At last, the nail being driven home, and perhaps a little beyond it, the carpenter looked up.

"Dicky," began she, "you have never been at your books at all to-day."

"Pooh! how do you know that? I was at Fitzgerald Place this morning," he added, in order to change the subject.

"Oh, indeed! How is Dorothy?"

"Blooming. Gave us no tip, though, the old—the old——," and failing to find a proper epithet wherewith to stigmatise Miss O'Hegarty's conduct, he hurled the hammer across the garden.

"You had money the other day."

"I lost it all to Orpen. I say, Nell, what do you think? Orpen told me he took one of the waiters for old Rafferty the other night. 'Pon my word, he came up to me and said, 'I'm blest if I know the servants from the gentlemen here!' and said he was awfully

near asking the man who announced us to get him a partner. Ho, ho! They looked a great deal more at home in their evening dress, though. By Jove, he said that was the way he could distinguish them."

"Which speech exactly proves that Mr. Orpen is a vulgar-minded snob."

"Snob!" echoed the collegian scornfully. "He's no such thing. His father is a country gentleman, and they're most highly connected."

"I can't see what difference that makes," returned his sister, dryly.

"Listen, Nell," said Mr. Dicky, jumping up all of a sudden from his can, "just—ah—lend a fellow a couple of shillings, will you?"

"What for, now, Dicky?"

"Well, Mahoney Quain has a—a tea-party in his rooms to-night, and Orpen and Griffiths are to be at it, and they're going to help me with my mathematics; so I only just want a couple of shillings in my pocket, you know—just to have them in my pocket," he repeated, and he looked coaxingly at her, and held out one hand. "The governor's going into the theatre to-night, and he and I'll come home together," he added, with a pleading look.

"What did you do with the money you had last week?"

"What money? Ah! sure I never have any at all."

"Indeed you have, Dicky, and I can't lend you this; it is too bad;" and Miss Davoren put on a severe air.

Dicky caught sight of Tib, and the pebble was discharged against his fat ribs with a force that sent the luckless animal flying in the direction of the house as fast as his legs would carry him.

"Don't then, Miss," retorted he viciously; "don't, that's all; and see if I'll take you to Gardiner Street on Sunday—that's all either," and plumping back on the water-can, he began to sort out another nail to drive in the wheelbarrow.

"Listen, Dicky. I'm not refusing to lend you the money, but when *do* you mean to take to your books?"

"Ah! what do you know about it, child?" returned he, in a somewhat softened tone. "I'm not three months in yet; and look at all the hard work I did with those beastly mathematics there, to pass. Every man takes a rest after

he enters, like that;" and he looked up out of the corner of his eye, to see how this told.

She remained silent; she had not heard him at all, for she was thinking of something else as she watched the gradually darkening sky.

"I saw your partner, Nell, to-day;"—Dicky struck into a fresh subject;—"that Mr.—oh, Mr. O'Rooney Hogan. Decentish sort of fellow that, now. He inquired for you."

"Did he?" said Miss Nellie quietly, turning to go into the house.

"Oh, Nell! I say, Nellsie jewel, you're forgetting the half-crown."

"Oh dear! oh dear!" said she, putting her hand in her pocket, and giving it to him.

"Now, Dicky, don't be late, I beg of you."

"I'll take you on Sunday," vouchsafed the youngster, now restored to good humour; "and oh! I say, Dorothy says she's heard, next week or the week after there's to be a command night at the Royal, and we're both to go with her."

Nellie gave no sign of having heard, beyond an inclination of her head as she sped back to the house; and the boy returned to his hammering with renewed vigour.

When she reached her mother's room, she

raised the blind again, and seated herself in her own chair by the window, looking out at the sunset, fast fading now. A grey mass of cloud, edged with a dull crimson, and through a rift lower down by the horizon a tiny fiery speck fast sinking out of sight. The spires of the city, lying between her and the west, were clear and hard against the light; and over towards the north a mist was gathering fast. Folding her hands in her lap, Nellie began to trace over again in her mind the events of the night; and many a smile rose to her lips at the incongruous figures that presented themselves to her memory. Hogan's image certainly was prominent; and from the time of his being introduced to her to their last dance together, she followed every word and look as far as her memory aided her. How strange that she should meet him again there!—and she wandered back from the pale wintry landscape before her eyes, to that glowing, burning day in July when they sat together in St. Swithin's schoolroom, amid the din and crash of pianos. There it was all a white hot glare, —white walls, white dresses, and noise. She remembered well the headache it gave her.

Her remembrance of her pleasant neighbour was scarcely so distinct—the Bishop's nephew, and a barrister, and related to the Superior, Mother Assumption:—so much the Raffertys, who seemed to hold him in great esteem, had told her. He had not seemed to respond to their pressing attentions the other night, Miss Nellie reflected, with the least possible tinge of mischief suffusing her consciousness. Would Dicky go to Gardiner Street on Sunday? and would Mr. Hogan be there? Surely by Sunday he would have forgotten everything about it. Then she began to wonder if she could recognize him; and she called up one by one the features of his face,—dark eyes, a long straight nose——Nellie painted an ideal portrait so flattering, that had its original presented himself before her, she would have found but few points of resemblance in her creation. She remained in the window-seat for a long time, weaving all manner of fancies, as strange and unstable as the flitting shapes of the clouds. The room was so quiet, so warm,—not a sound, save the fall of the wood-ashes in the fireplace, disturbed her reverie. The last pale rays of the sun fell on her mother's

portrait above the chimneypiece—a pallid chalk head, with wide low brows and almond-shaped wistful eyes—wistful and sad, though she was only twenty when it had been taken. Some faces bear the shadow of coming troubles even at their brightest and freshest. A little glass on the table held violets,—a few pinched things that had peeped up by mistake in a sheltered corner, and had been summarily cut short in their unseasonable career by Dicky. Their sweet faint odour reached Nellie in her window-seat. A redbreast perched suddenly on a branch beneath, and, fixing his bright little eyes on the window from which he was used to receive crumbs, struck into a loud shrill song. It sounded so near, Nellie almost started, and forgot dreamland. The cloud-castles were shattered, the bright lights faded in the west, and a cold green tone took the place of the crimson bar. The whole sky assumed that Indian-ink colour we see only in the late autumn; and when she turned her eyes round into the room again, she was astonished to find that it was nearly dark. She felt almost guilty as she picked up the neglected sewing which had fallen on the floor.

CHAPTER VI.

“ On ne sait rien d'une nation, tant qu'on n'a pas scruté les ressorts secrets de sa vie morale et analysé les forces organiques dont un examen superficiel ne montre que les résultats. Sous les apparences extérieures, qui ne sont que les indices, l'observateur est impatient de découvrir les principes d'actions, comme, sous l'enveloppe épaisse des muscles, l'anatomiste met à nu le réseau des nerfs. . . . L'homme fait ses dieux à son image. . . . Pour beaucoup de peuples, le caractère national et caractère religieux se confondent en un seul qui forme leur originalité dans la famille humaine. . . .”
—*George Bousquet, “ La Religion en Japon.”*

HOGAN was on his way homewards from the Four Courts one afternoon. Deep in meditation, he was bethinking himself, as he steered his way through the mud, that he must, without delay, repair to the Bishop, to render up an account of his doings since their last meeting. It would not do by any means to take an independent tone with the old gentleman; and after all, the young man thought that he deserved so much attention. Then, if he should cavil or find fault, it was so easy to

convince him ; and he smiled as he thought of the simple artifices by which he had so often hoodwinked his venerable relative. Affairs were going on very well with him now. Briefs were plentiful, and the attorneys seemed to have taken him quite into their good graces. Before going on circuit he thought of giving a large dinner-party to some influential Dublin priests, and to some of his uncle's colleagues. One of the most approved means of "working the clerical dodge" is to give big dinners to their reverences ; and this nephew of a Bishop was by no means ignorant of how much a champagne dinner at the Tresham or Melbourne might do for him—especially now in the beginning of Term.

While ruminating in his mind a list of names to submit to his lordship's approval, he was almost knocked down by his new friend Mr. Saltasche, who was crossing the footpath of Bachelor's Walk to get to his car.

"Hillo, Mr. Hogan ! is that you ?—the very man I wanted to see. I had forgotten your address. Will you come down to my office with me ? I want you to look over some papers, and give me your opinion of them."

"With pleasure, indeed," replied the barrister smiling.

Both gentlemen mounted the car. Saltasche, who seemed in the best of humours, turned, as if moved by a sudden thought, to Hogan :

"Can you dine with me at the Melbourne to-day? Have you anything better on hand?"

"Nothing doing to-day, Mr. Saltasche. Very willingly."

"I very often dine there or at Trude's—very often: it is so handy, instead of going out to the country, you know."

"You sleep in town, then?"

"Yes; I've got a little bedroom fitted up in my offices. I don't use it very often, though."

The car drew up at the door of the broker's office. He led the way up the broad, well-lighted staircase, and having pushed open the swing-door of his room, stepped in first, and held it for the barrister to enter. On turning round, he uttered an exclamation of surprise. In his own arm-chair, which had been pulled out of its place and turned towards the fire, sat a man puffing a cigarette.

“Hillo, Captain Poignarde ! is that you ?”

The intruder jumped up and shook himself together. Throwing the cigarette into the fire, he advanced to meet the broker.

He was by no means prepossessing, Hogan thought, who was looking askew at him as he stood under the gaslight. Of middle height, with whiskers and hair of the same faded blonde, his face bore all the marks of dissipation and vice : a furtive, watery eye, and tremulous lips, told the tale of excess. His speech proved him to be an Englishman, as unmistakably as his bearing and dress proclaimed him a military man.

“Good-evening, Mr. Saltasche. Sorry to disturb you at this late hour. I—er,—just wanted to tell you——” here he became aware of Hogan’s presence behind the broker’s figure, and dropped his voice discreetly—“just wanted to tell you that I’d be obliged by your selling out—say a hundred and fifty, or more, pounds’ worth of stock to-morrow.”

The broker raised his eyebrows slightly.

“Of course, Captain Poignarde, if you require it. I hope Colonel Anstruther is well.”

"He's quite well, thank you," replied Poignarde, who showed some confusion in his tone, and seemed fidgety to get away.

"Well, what time to-morrow will you be likely to call?"

"Er—about twelve, Mr. Saltasche, I think. Hope it won't trouble you."

"Dear no—not at all."

So the military man blundered out of the room, glad to escape without further parley.

The broker turned his head and looked after him with a sort of amused smile.

"Do you see that fellow?" said he to Hogan; "he's going the pace; he married an heiress—ran away with her, I believe some one told me. She, if she'd waited a while, would have been worth her quarter of a million. Fact, sir. As it was, she was cut off with four or five thousand; she was only of age the other day, and this animal is squandering every penny. I have heard she is exquisitely beautiful, too,—I haven't seen her."

"What could she see in him?" asked Hogan.

"God knows! I never heard the whole

story. Some schoolgirl fancy," returned Saltasche, who was busy at a huge iron safe behind his desk.

"Look over those, Mr. Hogan, if you please," he said, flinging, as he spoke, some parchments on the table, "while I go to look what these fellows are after"; and he turned and went by a side door into the clerks' room to overlook the accounts of the day. An easy, pleasant master, this daily advent was no terror to his subordinates. In about twenty minutes he returned, to find Hogan standing with his back to the fire, holding one of the papers in his hand.

"Those I find all right and square, Mr. Saltasche,—no hitch whatever; but this—h'm—you have seen the deeds referred to. I dare say it's all secure too."

"These belong to a Mrs. Bursford, a sister-in-law of the convert Monsignor Bursford—you know him, I dare say?—belong to her and her daughter; and she has sold her land in Wicklow to invest the proceeds in my care. Those are title-deeds lodged as security."

Hogan folded up the papers and handed them to the broker.

"All right, sir—so far as I can judge from the deeds."

"So I thought myself," returned Saltasche; "but you see the Miss Diana Bursford mentioned there is Mrs. Bursford's daughter; and about the reality of her fortune there seem to be doubts."

"It seems to be a rather common complaint in regard to that article, nowadays," laughed the barrister.

"By Jove, yes; it's something tremendous the lying that goes on in this good city about money. This young lady started in life with the reputation of ten thousand pounds fortune. I do not think for a moment that her own family had anything to do with the absurd exaggeration, but there are always indiscreet friends—"

"Indiscreet friends who will run the figure up or pull it down with equal unveraciousness."

"Just so," nodded the broker; "and of late they have turned to the pulling-down process. However, Hanaper and Diesele, the family lawyers, have sent me these; and further it's no affair of mine. Lord Brayhead is one of the trustees for Miss Bursford's money; and

they—the ladies—are old friends of mine. Have you ever met them ?”

“No.”

“Well,” said Saltasche, pulling out his watch, “time we were moving, sir, I declare. Come along round to Trude’s,—I sent them word about our dinner;” and pulling on his top-coat, he passed his arm familiarly under that of Hogan, and they turned their steps in the direction of the hotel.

The night had fallen now, and a chill north wind swept the fast emptying streets; carriages rolled by, on their way homewards towards the squares and private streets; cabs and cars poured in endless stream to the railway stations; workmen passed rapidly in knots and couples, shaping their course towards their haunts by the river; the brilliantly lighted shop-windows began to become few and far between, and the city was rapidly putting on her more sombre and quiet attire for the night.

Trude’s was well lighted up. Red lamps shone on each side of the door, and a brace of smart waiters stood in attendance in the entry. Mr. Saltasche was evidently known

to them; and without a moment's delay both gentlemen were shown into a well-lighted room, through which a large fire diffused a pleasant warmth, agreeable enough to new comers from the cold world without.

Dinner was served without delay. Saltasche showed his usual *savoir faire* in the composition of the *menu*.

"Capital ox-tail soup," said he; "no use going in for *bisque* or *purée* here. Soup is not an institution of this country, you know, like our Burren Banks oysters. So we must put up with what we can get."

"This is good enough for anybody, I should say," returned Hogan; "I don't believe, excepting people who go in for style, that they ever use it here at all."

"No; the Irish middle class, I venture to say, beat the English in point of incompetency as cooks, and upon my word that's saying a good deal. They're not so wasteful, because they're so much poorer; but they're a deal more uncomfortable."

Hogan assented tacitly. He was indeed thinking of the beefsteaks and chops his landlady served him in his lodgings near the

Canal. Frightful beefsteaks, tough as leather, and chops fried and swimming in their own coarse fat. And her tea and coffee : if anything could be worse than the tea, was it not the coffee—muddy, flavourless, and usually tepid ?

“The best cooks, to my mind, are the Italians,—better tempered than Frenchmen, more patient, and less nonsense about them. French cooks are perfect devils to have in a house. The Lord Lieutenant brought over his own cook, a Neapolitan. I am told the dinners are something superb. By-the-bye, I hear his brown mare, the one entered for the Spring Meeting, has hurt her shoulder.”

“I don’t know,” returned the barrister carelessly ; “I never was a horsy man, and anyhow the Castle doings are my aversion.”

“God knows, I’m glad to hear you say so,” returned the broker. “It is something infernal the way they are discussed in Dublin,—it is such a little place, you see. You can’t turn round without every one knowing it. The most intensely snobbish place I ever was in.”

“Yes,” returned Hogan, “I go with you there. You see there are so many reasons for

that. It could not fail to be what it is : I only wonder, all things considered, that it isn't worse."

"Worse!—that would be hardly possible, I should fancy."

"Bless us ! yes, the root of it lies far back. You have to go back a century or more into the history of the country to see how deeply rooted is the class distinction between the two rival creeds. I assure you even Protestant tradesmen think they have the pull over any R. C. And that is a thing always gathers force as it gets older. So long as the Protestants were the recognized superiors of the others, they were not nearly so stuck-up and exclusive. There was far more friendly intercourse ; and, in fact, there were not the wicked partisans on both sides that we have seen since the disestablishment,—perhaps since Emancipation."

"Ah," returned Saltasche, "however it came about, bad feeling was stirred up on both sides by Emancipation ; the reason, I take it," he added, "that it never subsided was, your clergy learned their own strength. O'Connell taught them the trick, among others ;

and like all men raised at once from a very low position to a very high one—that is, politically speaking, in the way of controlling elections and so on—they have abused their power.”

“Abused their power!” echoed the barrister. “Hum,—I don’t know that the Government can charge them with that. They certainly have an enormous personal influence over the people; but in political matters, why, look at this Fenian business: in all Ireland, it is a fact there was but one Fenian priest. Their lives were actually threatened,—you know that.”

“I think,” said Saltasche, “and I base my opinion chiefly on my experience of the Church in Spain and Italy, that the reason of the clerical opposition to that movement was the dread of the republican free-thinking spirit imported into it, far more than loyalty to England.”

“Fenianism was low too,” said Hogan thoughtfully, “essentially low: it had not a single supporter of the social position of those who were concerned with the Young Irishmen; and I may tell you that priests are intensely aristocratic.”

"Well, there now, isn't that what I say?" put in Saltasche, replenishing, as he spoke, the glass of his companion; "precisely my position. They abominate Radicalism and Republicanism."

"Well now, in America we don't find them acting in conformity with that principle. They are not struggling to overthrow the institutions there——"

"Hah! are they not indeed? I have studied that question closely, I assure you. You have very little idea of the condition of affairs in the States. Before we are many years older, my good sir, they will be trying conclusions over there in a very practical fashion."

"I have never studied American questions of any kind," returned the barrister; "it is not at all an interesting country to me. I think, however, it is a general mistake to make so little account of America."

"I have very little Irish blood in me," said Saltasche, who was playing with some filberts on his plate; "but I do believe that for anybody who is fond of studying character, individual and national, a more interesting field is not to be found in the whole world than

Ireland. Dublin society is really a perfect study."

"Ay, a drop of ditchwater under a microscope; everybody pushing upwards on the social ladder, kicking down those behind. However, the Protestants have pretty well laid down the line to our people now, 'So far and no farther,' ever since the passing of the Church Act."

"Now is that really your opinion?" asked Saltasche. "Do you think that the social intercourse between the two parties has been checked by that measure?"

"God bless me,—yes. All through the country the feeling is most bitter. Why, I know many instances of people refusing to keep a Catholic servant in their house."

"Disgusting rubbish!" and the broker curled his lip.

"You are pretty liberal in your sentiments, Mr. Saltasche, like myself," said Hogan, fixing, as he raised his glass of wine to his lips, a peculiar look on his friend.

"I am very liberal," replied Saltasche, returning the look by one equally significant. "I don't believe any man possessed of judg-

ment, or knowledge of the world, could for a moment sympathise with the conduct of the English in this country—their conduct at this very instant. I only wonder your people bear it so patiently as they do.”

“ You mean, of course, their attitude socially and religiously ? ”

“ It is one and the same. The monstrous insolence of the English is at the bottom of all the troubles here. Talk of Infallibility and the Pope’s assumptions,—God bless me ! what is it, compared to the Anglo-Hibernian Protestantism ? A trifle light as air. Their religion is themselves ; and everywhere John Bull goes with his egotism and his Bible,—on the Continent, in India, Africa,—the story is identical ; hatred and rebellion spring up at once. A friend of mine, a bank manager in this country, told me the rector of the parish once came to his house. When going away, he said to him, with a sort of a snigger, ‘ You won’t take this as a visit—eh, eh, Mr.—ah—Nokes ? ’ ‘ I shan’t,’ he replied ; ‘ but next time you presume to come to my house, I shall take it as a visit, and I’ll kick you out of the door.’ He did well.”

"India is a good example," said Hogan, after laughing at the anecdote. "Look at that mutiny, caused altogether by the heartless, wanton insolence of English officers. It does not come out so much at home. You must see them out of their own country to appreciate their delightful qualities,—though, indeed, they do treat servants horribly."

"Treat servants badly?" said Saltasche. "Have you noticed that? Why, nowhere on earth are they better fed and paid."

"I mean their way of treating them as inferiors. Did you ever hear an officer swearing at his man, especially at his own servant? There is something most repulsive in it to me, that because a man takes your money to perform certain duties in return for it, you are entitled to treat him like a dog—like a creature devoid of all feeling or self-respect!"

"They are the best servants in the world," said Saltasche, "the English; the most perfectly trained and comfortable, and—treacherous."

"Treacherous! By Jove! I should think they are that; but since the days of Abraham I fancy there has always been that class

hostility. Look at the servants of the Tichborne family. The English have some knack of always making themselves hated by their subordinates."

"I don't believe, now," said Saltasche musingly, "Irish servants could do that. They're not given to those deep schemes at all, so far as I know them."

"Well," said Hogan slowly, shaking his head, "I've had some little experience of them in the Four Courts, and, if they don't concoct those infernal schemes their fellows do across the water, it's merely because their heads won't hold them."

Saltasche laughed heartily. "That was a shocking murder down the country, eh?" said he.

"Yes, most extraordinary. The usual thing, eviction. It's a mistake to suppose that the Land Act, however conceived, will put an end to that sort of business. They mistake the cause altogether."

"How? It is not revenge—wild justice."

"Not at all. The Irish agrarian murders are prompted by the same motive as those French rural crimes we read of so frequently,—

intense love of the land itself ; and the landlord or his agent is not hated one bit more than anybody else that stands in their way—not a whit. It is all nonsense to say that they hate the landlord as a foreigner, a usurper. Mrs. —, and that unfortunate Mr. —, were not English, and see how they were shot. Bless me ! they shoot their own relatives, if they stand in their way, quite as readily as any Sassenach of them all.”

“ They do—not a doubt of it,” said Saltasche thoughtfully. “ Yet the English papers will insist on laying every murder on the everlasting ‘disaffection.’ It has nothing to do with ninety-nine hundredths of them.”

“ Nothing whatever. Believe me, they are more afraid of each other, more disaffected and more treacherous to their own next-door neighbours, than they are to England. Look at the farmers : they daren’t whitewash their house, lest a neighbour should imagine they had money, and inform the agent. If they kill one of their own geese or ducks, they eat it with closed doors and windows, for fear it should be thought they were well off. They lodge money in the banks at three or may be

two per cent. interest, and the very same men—will you believe it?—borrow money at *six* per cent. from the *same* bank to pay their rent. Just imagine it.”

“Well, you see, though it looks absurd, there is a solid reason at the bottom of it. If the landlord gets a bill at three months or six months in payment of his rent, he fancies the fellow is poor.”

“That is so. Now there must be something rotten in the state of things when it is the interest of the people to keep themselves poor, and to look poor. There is a heavy drawback on their prosperity and industry. It reminds me of the stories of the French peasants before the Revolution. And it is such a demoralising state of affairs. Habits such as are engendered under this *régime* are most destructive. The entire tenant-at-will system is abominable.”

“I don’t in the least see how it is to be remedied. There would seem to be no medium between a confessedly mischievous system and wild schemes framed and proposed by Jack-o’-lantern politicians, having for object the simple spoliation of the proprietors.”

“ Well, what can you expect of the people ? Take into account their wretchedness and degradation, and their ignorance, they really are not one whit more civilized than the peasants whom Arthur Young describes in France a century ago. How, then, can you expect them to have more just or equitable ideas ? It is, anyhow, a frightful and disgraceful thing that there should be a penalty on industry and enterprise.”

“ How strange it is that the English are so devoid of this love of the land ! An English farmer thinks only of the ground as he thinks of a machine, which, properly manipulated, will bring him in money. What on earth is the fascination it has over these Irish ? ”

“ It has never been explained,” said Hogan. “ The French peasant is the same. Perhaps it is some queer lingering love of the conquered race for its own land. The native Gauls and the native Irish have some points of similarity historically. It may have had its origin in that.”

“ Extraordinary people ! ” mused Saltasche ; “ how in the world are they ever to be improved ? ”

"Sweetness and Light," said Hogan with a smile, pulling up his chair closer to the fire.

"And there the priests bar the way. It is incomprehensible how the people follow them so blindly in refusing the national education system."

"Tut, tut!—not so fast. The whole cause of the dislike, or rather distrust, lies in the conduct of the Protestant party. They always wanted to force Scripture, in some shape or sort, down the throats of the children, and insisted on their right to do it. Bah! the priests were quite right to resist such aggression. And let the parsons promise what they like, from the very first time they ever established a school in Ireland, proselytism was their business. There is not a brat as high as your knèe but knows that, and hates them accordingly. Besides, the people have always had the idea, and that too with solid reason, that this proselytism was not for the sake of merely winning over their souls to the rival Church, but also, mark you, as a means of obtaining their allegiance, and thereby strengthening and securing the proselytisers' own position as conquerors in a subjugated

country. So at all times a pervert, or, as the *Saturday Review* says, a 'vert,' was looked upon in the double light of a deserter and an apostate."

"Is that so now?" asked Saltasche.

"It is literally as true at the present moment as it was a century ago. Even here in Dublin, as well as in the country, any Roman Catholic 'going over' is held to have sold himself body and soul for temporal advancement."

"Anyhow the Church Establishment was a monstrous injustice. High time it was done away with. A scandalous absurdity."

"Yes; but after all it weighed but lightly on the people—as compared, of course, with former times. I almost think it would have been more expedient to have postponed disestablishment for a time, or at least to have disestablished the Scotch branch first. The priests were, I believe, the chief instigators of that movement; and since its accomplishment, strange to say, seem tolerably indifferent; one might almost fancy they regretted being deprived of their pet grievance."

"Hah! I'll tell you why. They wanted

to get the money. They fully expected to get their share."

"Do you imagine they looked for concurrent endowment?"

"Hardly," replied the broker. "They know better than to take a State provision; but they thought to get it, and think they will get it still, for a Catholic University."

Hogan shook his head. "No, no," said he; "Trinity is absorbing such Catholic youngsters as want college education and degrees. I think the Stephen Green University merely draws medical students. After all, they have a very good excuse for patronizing Trinity. Few people can afford to lose time and money taking out a degree that has no market value—a mere certificate. Look at me, for example. What should I be doing with a Catholic University degree? Moreover, who are their professors?—mere nobodies, or men trained in and belonging to the Queen's Universities or Trinity."

"It's a pity, Mr. Hogan," said Saltasche, "that you are not in St. Stephen's; if you were to talk that way, you'd soon make your mark."

"All in good time," laughed the barrister, emptying his glass. "I hope to be one day."

"I think," said Saltasche, "that one important feature in the case is the social distinction of Trinity. That has an attraction for Catholics of a certain grade. There is a marked desire on the part of many of the professional set to know and mix with the other persuasion."

"Decidedly so. And an equally marked desire on the part of their *ecclesiastical* rulers that they shall do nothing of the kind. Anyhow," added Hogan, "if the Catholics want to get into Protestant society, they don't go the right way about it. Men, of course, know each other; but it's the *women* who bar the way. R. C. women are terribly behind the age. Did you hear the last story of Lady St. Aldegonde? She wrote to her friends, the Hawardens of Westmeath, to come up in time for the dinner of the 14th. "*We shall have only our own friends,*" said she; "*none of these dreadful Dublin lawyers' wives.*"

"Ay," said Saltasche with a laugh, "that's a good one; but," he added seriously, "what

a curious affair this new marriage law is. Now tell me, if Catholics and Protestants can't marry in Dublin, why can they in London? It's the boast of your Church that her doctrine, etc., is the same and infallible everywhere. Yet this law is unknown in America, Scotland, England; and in Paris too, for a mixed marriage came off there last week."

"I confess I don't understand it," replied Hogan. "Mixed marriages are seldom happy, they say."

The broker laughed sardonically.

"That's hardly a reason," said he drily.

"But I confess it looks odd to see people take a trip to London to get married, and come home coolly in spite of the awful denunciations, and live like other people, in the teeth of the priest's assurance that they are not married at all."

Hogan laughed and shook his head.

"It just proves thoroughly what the Infallibility means," continued Saltasche. "I don't wonder at the old Torys' talk of *autos da fe* and the Inquisition. 'Pon my word, I'm liberal enough, but some things do make me uneasy."

"Stuff," said Hogan; "that's all gone by and forgotten long ago—impossible and nonsensical."

"How do they arrange," asked Saltasche, "in the case of poor people who can't afford to go to London, or to buy a dispensation?" And he looked askance at Hogan.

"I know of some cases—they get married by the Registrar, and never mind the religious ceremony at all. I think it a bad plan."

"It is, begad. But in your Church they have always kept up the old tradition—one law for the rich and another for the poor."

"Bah! tell me where it isn't the same—it's human nature. Wealth has everywhere its prerogatives and privileges." The barrister laughed a little sardonically.

"Come and look in at the theatre; it's only ten minutes' past nine," said the host, pulling out his watch as he spoke.

Now, Hogan had work before him at home—work, indeed, that would keep him out of his bed until quite the small hours of the morning; and he did not intend to waste any time in theatres. So he told his host plainly that.

he could not bestow further time upon him, he had two cases to get up.

Then a car was called, and Mr. Saltasche was dropped in Hawkins Street by Hogan, who vainly endeavoured to prevent that liberal gentleman from paying the man. Saltasche only laughed when the barrister tried to stay his hand, and chucking the jarvey half a crown instead of his legal shilling, disappeared under the arches of the theatre, while Hogan drove home alone to his work.

CHAPTER VII.

“Why should this desert silent be ?
For it is unpeopled ? No ;
Tongues I'll hang on every tree,
That shall civil sayings show :
Some, how brief the life of man
Runs his erring pilgrimage,
That the stretching of a span
Buckles in his sum of age ;
Some, of violated bonds
'Twixt the souls of friend and friend.”

As you Like it.

ONE Monday morning, Miss Nellie Davoren might have been observed taking peculiar and unusual care with her toilette. She braided her brown hair in the very last style, a modification of Miss Malowney's, just as Miss Malowney's was an exaggeration of “Her Excellency's.” She pulled two silk dresses out of her wardrobe—a blue and a grey—and spent some time deliberating which to put on. The grey finally obtained most favour in her sight, and

she decided to wear it. At twelve o'clock Nellie was ready; and her brother, who had been shouting impatient summonses and threats up the stairs for half an hour previous, seized and hurried her off, vowing he would be late for lecture, and promising all sorts and kinds of misconduct in revenge if such turned out to be the case.

"Oh, there now, Dicky," said Miss Nellie, at last, "do not go on at that rate: you will be in long before one o'clock."

"How do you know, Miss? and what's it to you? The idea of your talking!" returned the saucy boy in his most scornful tone.

"Since you entered college, you have become unbearable. Do you imagine that knowing Latin and Greek gives you a right to be so impertinent? You think you're a man; but, indeed, that's not the way men behave. Look at Mr. Orpen and Mr. Hogan, how polite they are."

"Yah! because you're not their sister," retorted Dicky.

"No matter, sir; gentlemen are always polite. There now, the clock is only just ringing, and with all your hurry we are five minutes too soon."

“ So much the better. Cool down and look pleasant over it.”

Just then they came upon a tawdrily dressed nurse carrying a baby, and followed by a number of little children. They belonged to an acquaintance of the Davorens', and Nellie stopped to inquire for their mother from the nurse.

Dicky, who was a little in advance, turned half round with such an angry face that she hastily quickened her step to overtake him. He stood quite still until she came up, and then said, in an angry and serious tone,

“ Did I possibly see you speak to that girl of the Wildings ? ”

“ Yes ; I asked for her mistress.”

“ Don't you ever dare to speak to her again : never notice her on any account. You hear me, Nellie ? ”

“ I do. Why not speak to her ? What can you mean ? ”

“ I mean this, then, since you must have meanings and reasons,—she's not a person fit for you to speak to. I know what she is very well.” So he did ; for the “ person ” in question was a companion and associate of several of his college friends.

Nellie made him no rejoinder. She felt shocked and mortified, and getting into the train seated herself silently in a corner alone, for Dicky had got into the smoking compartment with a neighbour of theirs, a Mr. Saltasche. Neither she nor her father was acquainted with him, but Dicky was on friendly terms with him. Arrived at the terminus, Dicky reappeared, and sulkily informing her that he would not return to dinner, and that Dorothy must send Peter, the man-servant, home with her, hailed a cab, and putting her into it, departed speedily on his own road.

Nellie looked out of the window after his retreating form, striding along beside his companion. She had noted of late—not without much misgiving—the change in the boy's manner. A dictatorial impertinence had taken the place of his former good-humour, and sulky reticence made all question as to his employment of his time and outdoor pursuits bootless and unsatisfactory. Cousin Dorothy supplied him liberally with pocket-money, which, with his own allowance, disappeared mysteriously; he was always wanting more, and always grumbling that he had never

money like other fellows. A beautiful boy, he had been his mother's darling; and from the day of his birth he had been spoiled. His sister and mother, and in accordance with their example the servants, had always given way to him. Whoever suffered inconvenience, or came short of any comfort, it was not to be Master Dicky; and the lad took it all as his birthright. He was a fine boy naturally, and was good-natured and generous of spirit. But he had never been denied anything, and he had never learned to deny himself anything. It seemed perfectly natural, and a matter of course, that his sister should give him her allowance of pocket-money. He had the grace, to be sure, to ask her politely for it, and even to call it lending; and sometimes, when he chanced to be in a particularly good temper, vague visions of paying it back would cross his brain. But he did not feel at all bound to do so. What was she but a girl? and what did women want money for? Indeed Mr. Dicky, like a great many of his kind, held the pleasant theory that women had no business to have money except for men to take it from them. If the young gentleman thought about the

matter at all, his thoughts probably took that shape.

Nellie soon arrived in Fitzgerald Place. Peter opened the door, and bade her walk into the dining-room.

“Bless us, Nell! is that you?” said Miss O’Hegarty, who was busy arranging a wintry-looking bouquet in a china basket. “You look quite nice, my dear,—a great deal too nice for my pack of old women. They’ll fall on you tooth and nail, just for the spite of it. Come here, and see if you can arrange these. I want them for the drawing-room by-and-by. Don’t splash your dress now! I want to go to the drawing-room to see if Peter has put things to rights. Peter, Peter!” she called; and Nellie was left to arrange the chrysanthemums and veronicas in the basket.

Miss O’Hegarty’s Mondays were the event of her week. She did not go into society; at least, since her father’s death she had given up entertainments, but she had by no means given up her circle, and had hit on the popular and cheap device of weekly afternoon teas to assemble her coterie. She had a large number of relatives and connections; and as since the

Church Act was passed a great many county families had thronged up to live in Dublin, her Monday afternoons were as punctually attended as the Drawing-room itself. Gentlemen seldom came. Now and again some old country acquaintance would drop in with his wife or daughters, and, appalled at the gathering of women, drop out again just as quickly as politeness would allow. Married ladies and spinsters of her own standing, and young ladies who had reached the age when the appetite for scandal may be indulged without any of the *jeune personne* squeamishness, composed the majority of her *habitués*. It was not without some misgiving that she gave Nellie Davoren an invitation to one of these festivities.

Nellie very soon finished arranging the flowers, and hastened upstairs to aid her cousin and Peter in the drawing-room. This was a large room, with a fine bay window. The furniture was for the most part old, and some of it had come from Castle O'Hegarty. Queer old girandoles, with mirrors that reflected you upside-down, or broader than you were long, as a spoon does, hung here

and there among the pictures on the walls. Dorothy had not adopted the modern custom of hanging her walls with china until they resembled a kitchen dresser; but had she liked she could have made a fine display of old Worcester and Wedgewood ware—a goodly stock of both being stowed in a great glass-fronted chiffonier. She liked solidity and massiveness in her surroundings: the chairs and sofas were enormous of frame; but for all that there were plenty of pretty things scattered about—little lounging chairs, velvet covered, and with gilt legs and backs a pretty little table held Miss O’Hegarty’s work materials; and here and there were artistic mementoes of her foreign travels in the shape of pretty statuettes and ornaments of various kinds.

Peter was carrying in flower pots out of the little greenhouse on the leads, and under Miss O’Hegarty’s directions distributing them through the room. On a sofa-table stood the tea equipage, and the top of the grand piano was utilized to hold spare cups and plates of cakes.

“You will do the honours, Nellie. And, Peter, mind what you’re about to-day, and if

you must spill coffee and tea the way you did last week, don't do it upon the only lady of title in the room."

Some inarticulate growlings, as Peter descended the stair in quest of another pot of myrtle, was the only notice vouchsafed to this recommendation.

"He's getting old," continued Miss O'Hegarty, turning to Nellie,—“getting old, my dear, and past his work.”

A frightful crash on the staircase followed this asseveration, and seemed to have occurred precisely to bear out the mistress's opinion,—the fact being that Peter had overheard her remark, and took the means of smashing the flower-pot as a double-barrelled expedient of revenging himself and venting his temper.

The lady divined the state of affairs, and with a discretion the fruit, no doubt, of long experience, judged better to take no notice. So she pretended not to have heard anything, and left the old gentleman to gather up the mess at his leisure.

"He's done it on purpose, me dear." Whenever Miss O'Hegarty was vexed her native Kerry brogue asserted itself in all its purity.

“Just wants to aggravate me; but he shan’t. He’s been at it all morning. Old devil!” she added wrathfully; “who on earth would put up with him but meself?”

Peter, a shrivelled little old man, with apple and red cheeks and sly blue eyes, was one of those ancient retainers whose impudence and good-for-nothingness people feel themselves bound to endure simply because they have been in the habit of doing so for a greater or less number of years. The race is fast becoming extinct, with no great loss to the community at large. Between Peter and his mistress there was a perpetual feud going on. They were always at cross-purposes about something or another; and Dicky Davoren declared that a considerable portion of the time of both was spent devising schemes to vex each other.

“Everything’s done, I do believe,” said the lady of the house, giving a final glance around. “Come up to my room, Nellie, while I dress myself.”

They passed up the stairs without seeming to see the irate Peter busy with brush and pan, and reached a large airy bedroom over the drawing-room floor.

Nellie sat down, and Miss O'Hegarty proceeded to divest herself of a dark morning dress, and having arranged her ringlets, put on a heavy black silk dress, with lace to match her rich headdress.

"I hope I'll do, Cousin Dorothy," said Nellie, looking dubiously at her simple costume.

"Pooh! do, child? indeed you will. I never have a mortal but a pack of women about me—horrid lot! I hope you won't repent coming among them. See if I left the hand-glass over there."

"They are not all old, are they, cousin?" asked Nellie, handing her the article in question.

"Old: humph! If they heard you say so! There will be Mrs. Bursford. Now she knew your mother long ago; but she's older—oh yes, much older; and her daughter, Miss Diana, is a belle. She's over thirty. Her cousins the Bragintons say she's thirty-five. But that's cousins' talk all the world over. You'll see them here; and an amiable collection they are. They're nieces of Lord and Lady Brayhead, and are on a visit to them,

—nieces on her side, you know. And the eldest, Miss Blanche, is going to be married ; at least, so she's given out. We'll see what her aunt, Mrs. Bursford, says of it. Nellie, see if you can find the eye of that hook."

"Now, child," said Miss O'Hegarty, turning round, "let's have a look at you. Smooth your hair ; and there's hot water ; and let me see—yes, I've got a bit of a lace collar and cuffs, which will look better than that."

While Nellie did as she was told, the elder lady rummaged in drawers and boxes, and at last brought forth a collar and wristbands of fine Brussels point, and a queer oblong gold brooch, with double rows of pearls, blackened with age, set in it.

"I'll give you this brooch, Nellie," she said, pinning it in the girl's collar as she spoke ; "it was given to me long ago by a man whom I daresay your mother recollects—Laurence Lentaigne. He's dead ages ago," she added quickly, seeing a look of curiosity in the young face so close to hers.

They went downstairs now, and had scarcely reached the drawing-room when the company

began to arrive. It was already a quarter-past three.

"Mrs. Fitzharmon Dillon, Mrs. Hepenstall, Mrs. Biggs," roared Peter in his broadest Limerick brogue. Another of Peter's tricks when in bad humour was to speak in the coarsest country fashion he could manage. His mistress darted a—

"How are you, me dear Mrs. Biggs? The children all well? My *dear* Mrs. Hepenstall! Back from London? We'll have tea in one instant, Nellie love. Oh! Miss Davoren, my cousin: Mrs. Hepenstall, Mrs. Biggs.

Nellie made a circular reverence, and hastened downstairs to see that Peter was bringing a really boiling urn. She found, as she had anticipated, that he was doing nothing of the kind; so, as he was called away by a succession of knocks at the door, she took advantage of his absence to enlist the cook's services in the interests of the tea-drinking, and have a properly munitioned tray carried up.

When she returned to the drawing-room she found the "kettledrum" in full swing. She was presented to all the ladies, who re-

ceived her graciously enough; and she sat down by Mrs. Hepenstall, a young married woman, with a good-natured handsome face.

"Dinner at the Chief Secretary's last night." A very dressy woman was talking in an abrupt, disjointed way. "Their Excellencies not there—couldn't come. No. What d'you think we heard? Corrie Vickars, the *aide-de-camp*, got it from London by telegraph—brother in War Office. Lord Newmarket—h'm—Lady Oaks! It's been expected at the clubs this while back."

"Nellie dear, go and make our tea," interrupted Miss O'Hegarty, nodding in the direction of the sofa-table.

"Lord Oaks went after by the next ——"

"No, Blanche," interrupted another lady; "Lord Oaks missed the *next* train, so he could not overtake them that night,—he had to wait till next morning."

The Misses Braginton had commenced this anecdote together, but gradually the younger and weaker had dropped out of the running, and now seized the opportunity of her elder sister pausing for breath to cut in again for the finish.

"They say," went on Blanche—Miss Braginton—"that he missed it *purposely*."

Miss O'Hegarty took off her spectacles and wiped them. Mrs. Fitzharmon Dillon, who knew nothing whatever of either party, but who wanted it to appear that she was conversant with the aristocratic doings on the other side of the Channel, threw out the following little random shot:—

"Lady Oaks was—ahem—very fast, you know."

"That's evident," snapped Miss Braginton; "but Corrie Vickars says the betting in London is even that Lord Oaks will take her back again."

"Especially as Newmarket is so poor, you know": the other Miss Braginton brought this out with an insinuating giggle.

A tall old lady, with a prominent hooked nose and cold blue eyes, who was seated on a sofa opposite, turned and looked reprovingly at her.

"Really, Blanche, you do go rather beyond your text. Mr. Vickars, I am certain, has not heard that; oh! come now."

"There are three children," continued Miss

Braginton, speaking rapidly, in order to divert the stream of public attention from the channel opened by the snubbing remark of the lady on the sofa.

“Dear! dear me!” said Miss O’Hegarty. “But it’s in the blood: look at her mother. You remember the Marquis of Cheltenham scandal? That was her mother, my dear.”

Miss O’Hegarty did not know one of these titled people whose names she now bandied so freely. Neither did she know anybody who did know them. Nevertheless, she could talk of them quite cleverly—even familiarly; and she was as thoroughly versed in all the bearings of her subject as a Court Chamberlain.

“I got my German governess at last,” put in Mrs. Hepenstall, impatient of the ill-natured Bragintons; “and brought her home with me from London.”

“Ah! did you now? Where did you get her?”

“The Brighams recommended her to me strongly.”

“Ah! there now, Mrs. Hepenstall,” cut in some one else, “and what is there new in style this time in London? It’s ludicrous the way we’re behind here.”

"Yes; positively we are two years behind Paris!" This from a pretty little lady, who had just come in.

"Paris! Bless us," said the hostess, "we don't think of Paris. London is good enough for us. And I declare, only for *Punch* and *Fun*, we'd never know even what clothes they were wearing over there."

"*Punch* does always give the fashionable hats, and the hair too, very correctly," said Mrs. Dillon, who was a county lady; "but *Fun* and *Judy* are not good style."

"No; nothing like *Punch*," went on Mrs. Hepenstall, speaking a little louder, and settling herself back on her chair. "I left sooner than we'd intended. Couldn't trust my chest in London these months." And she coughed in a most interesting manner.

"Tell us, what did you notice in the way of dressing hair?" This from Miss Braginton, to whom nature had been rather grudging in this respect, provoked a quickly stifled smile from the other ladies.

"Well, there were several styles, but the favourite and best seemed to be that of the Princess of ——. We saw her last Saturday.

The hair all carried up at the back, quite high under the bonnet, plain and smooth in front, and generally quite off the face."

"Now," said Miss O'Hegarty, putting on her spectacles, and deliberately surveying her visitor through them, "how about bonnets?"

"Oh! really most unsatisfactory. One good thing, you can wear hats almost anywhere. The bonnets are getting smaller, and prices larger—in inverse ratio—now. This is one of Rebons's last from Paris: what do you think of it?" and Mrs. Hepenstall inclined her head forwards. After a general inspection and admiration of the lady's very becoming head-piece, Mrs. Fitzharmon Dillon changed the subject.

"When did anybody hear of the George Lamberts?"

"Oh!" cried the two Bragintons simultaneously, "she's off to Nice. *He* is going on so badly. She says it's for her health she's going. Don't believe it. You know they went from this to Leamington. Dee Tee, my dear; and treats her—oh! frightfully; she never has a penny in her pocket. Never—for any purpose."

"Poor creature! She has a small settlement, has she not?" asked Mrs. Hepenstall, in a compassionating tone.

"I don't believe it. I assure you it's quite her own doings—quite." And the amiable Miss Braginton raised her voice insistingly. "George Lambert's father, and the family generally, are quite furious about her: say she neglected him, running after all sorts of excitement. We all know when the Buffs were here she never missed a thing that was going. She quite neglected the man, and he has taken to drink in consequence."

"It's rather hard on her to say that, now—don't you think so, Blanche?" put in the frisky matron, who owned a scampish husband too. A vicious toss of the head was the only notice vouchsafed by Miss Braginton.

"You were a great friend of hers, I thought, Blanche?"

This question came from a tall blonde woman, dressed, as blondes will dress, with a quantity of pale blue about her head and throat; her round cold blue eyes, with lashes and eyebrows of the same whitey yellow as her hair, were turned full on the

corner honoured by Miss Braginton's presence.

But she got no answer ; for that lady, whose versatility equalled her ill-nature, had gone down to the tea-table to see who the little girl was who was busy pouring out tea alone, and engaged speedily in conversation with her.

"Mrs. De Lancier, won't you have a cup ? Do—just one ! Nellie !" called the hostess, taking the cup from the lady in the low chair.

She was a Frenchified, stylish-looking little dame, with a head of dyed hair.

"Were you at the Castle on Tuesday evening ?"

"Oh yes ; I can't say I enjoyed myself, though. I was paired off with that dreadful old Tubbs, the Q.C. Stupid creature ! I do hate Buzfuzes. I never spoke to him all dinner-time. Really, only we are obliged to go there, I'd prefer staying away. They do manage things so badly."

"I have heard," began Miss O'Hegarty in a very grave tone, "that they have given great offence there latterly, being so careless about their arrangements. I'm sure in Lord

——'s time—(he went in, you know, for being popular, and all that sort of thing, lugging up all description of rubbish to the Castle, and being that polite and affable to them)—people were greatly annoyed by his going on that way. Just as if everybody was alike and equal in Ireland! At one of the private dinners, sending Solfa, that musician man, you know, down with Miss Sheedy of Castle Sheedy! And it wasn't that he did not know, either. There never was a dinner in his time that there wasn't a rumpus after it on account of the precedence. All just to make himself popular."

"They have no business," began Mrs. Bursford, "turning the Castle into a scramble of that kind. It's most insulting to the Conservative aristocracy here."

"I assure you," rejoined the hostess, "the drawing-rooms are the very same, if not worse. The Chamberlains must be perfect nonentities; they allow tradespeople of all sorts in; no distinction is observed at all. Really, in London you are safe not to meet that sort of mud. But here, I am told, when the people themselves don't go—these traders and shop-keepers, I mean—they send their daughters,

chaperoned by some city celebrity, nobody inquires about them at all, and so the place becomes the insufferable 'omnium gatherum' it is."

A general murmur of indignant assent filled the room, now pretty well stocked with Dorothy's *habitués*. Nellie was busy at the tea-table, but not so busy that she could not catch the substance of what was being said. She was more amused than edified at the airs of the ladies. There was something unreal and artificial about them, polished and refined of manner and appearance as they all were. And knowing as she did the relationship between the Bursfords and Bragintons, she could not help noting and being shocked at their ill-concealed hostility to each other.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Bursford, "in London it really is different. By-the-bye, Mrs. Hepenstall, did you see anything of Lady Dacres in London?"

"Er—no. In London it is so hard to see people. They were at their place in Leicestershire. It is really so difficult to see people in London!" Mrs. Hepenstall clearly did not like the question.

"Ah! yes; I should think so," put in Mrs. Dillon. "What an income one requires to live there! Now, when Mr. Dillon was in Parliament——"

"When Mr. Dillon was in Parliament" seemed to be the signal for a general rally of the listeners' forces in opposition to the reminiscences connected with that halcyon time. Miss Braginton threw herself into the fray.

"But it certainly is cheaper to live there than here," cried she with a sudden burst.

"The necessaries of life may be a little cheaper," said Miss O'Hegarty dogmatically; "but house-rent alone is quite an income. My friend Lady Brooker: her house in—ah, what was the name of it? some terrace in Hyde Park—was over six hundred a year."

The little yellow-haired lady looked up from her tea and the Carlsbad wafer she was nibbling.

"My dear Miss O'Hegarty, we are not all Lady Brookers. There are cheaper parts of London than Hyde Park. It is only the nobility or very rich people who live in the Kensington or Hyde Park quarters.

"Mercy, yes, Mrs. De Lancier! I know you can get houses cheaper in London than you can in any part of Dublin; but in places you couldn't live in. You would be out of society, quite."

"You lived in Belsize Park, now, Mrs. De Lancier."

This was from the second Braginton; but the hostess adroitly shelved the question of topography by turning to Nellie and ordering her to play for the assemblage.

Miss Davoren began a brilliant drawing-room piece, and conversation went on with renewed vigour.

"In London there are twice as many sets and ranks of society as in Dublin." Miss Braginton was determined to keep to the subject.

"But, excuse me, dear Miss Braginton, we make distinctions here that they do not in London. Rich tradesfolk cannot get into society here, as there, on the mere strength of their money. We value position and family far more on this side of the water. Doctors hold a better position here—how it came to be so I cannot tell—than in England."

"And then professionals are the aristocracy of Dublin," said Miss Bursford. "On the whole, I think they are in a better set here too."

"I don't think so," said the little Mrs. De Lancier, with something of a huffy air. "*We* went into an excellent set in England, and we met professionals in every house." And she went away with quite a savage look at the Bragintons.

"I hope Mrs. De Lancier isn't put out, now," said Miss O'Hegarty, a little anxiously, looking at Mrs. Bursford as she spoke.

"Her father was an eminent doctor in England," hastily replied Miss Braginton; "and the mother married a second time—Lieutenant-General Anstruther."

"Oh, ho! If I'd thought that, I'd never have said a word. What a stylish person she is—and so young! Well, since she's English, I'm not altogether sorry she got a knock. I never could endure English people."

"Can't you, now, Miss O'Hegarty?" rejoined Miss Braginton. "So many of our relations are pure English. I assure you we are quite fond of them."

Miss O'Hegarty had one invaluable talent.

No matter how grave a conversational *contre-temps* might be, whether she had caused it or not, her imperturbability was unequalled. In truth, she seemed rather to court them than otherwise, and dearly loved to administer a good snub or "taking down" when a fair chance offered. On this occasion she looked coolly at the speaker, and noting the glitter of her beady black eyes and the somewhat defiant pose of her head, answered in the same tone—

"I am glad to hear you say so. You have a reason, to be sure, for feeling well disposed towards them; but, for myself, my prejudices are of too old standing."

Nellie, now freed from her duties, covered up her teapots in huge cosies, and coming up to the circle gathered near the fire, seated herself in the velvet chair left vacant by the little Englishwoman.

"I never cared for English people either," said Diana Bursford; "and I am sure on the Continent they are so hated. You see them there to perfection."

"I have known them upset a whole hotel in the middle of the night to look for a bag or umbrella. There wasn't a row at the Kater

Saisons last year but what they made." Miss O'Hegarty laid her knitting on her lap. "Don't you recollect, Emma," she continued, turning to Mrs. Bursford, "at Ghent, when poor Maria Gordon was lying so ill at the hotel there, —dying, positively—and at eleven o'clock one night there arrived in an English family? They were told there was a lady upstairs very dangerously ill; and the first inquiry was, of course, as to its being infectious. No; the landlord assured them it wasn't infectious; but would they please not to make a noise? Upstairs they stormed, calling and shouting and tumbling boxes about. They woke me at the far end of the corridor, and up I jumped and gave them such a talking to. They quieted down when I got the landlady to threaten to turn them out of the house: even that would not keep them quiet. Next morning, at five o'clock, we heard a voice roaring down the corridor—'My bawth. I want a large bawth of cold wataw. I could not exist without a cold bawth ewewy morning.' John Gordon ran past the wretch, and called into Maria's room, 'My dear, I hope you're not disturbed. It's only one of these

Cook's tourists trying to get up a row on his own account.' We heard no more of the bath, I assure you."

"Well, I don't dislike them, indeed," said Mrs. Hepenstall; "but it is quite true that they are very rude to foreigners at the hotels. I sat next a nice Prussian family at the table d'hôte at Gratz; and the lady told me she would sit beside an English family for twenty years, and never address them, for they either do insult, or have the reputation of insulting, every stranger who addresses them."

"Yes," said Mrs. Bursford; "and after all it may be some English cheesemongers who are giving themselves all these airs, and they are never done talking of themselves and their belongings. First what *I* eat, what *I* do, *my* stick, *my* dog."

"I have noticed that," said Mrs. Dillon. "I went over to Paris to bring home Katharine from school, and a lady picked up with me on the boat. All the way up to Paris she talked of nothing but herself, her family and affairs; and at the end she gave me her card, and asked me to call upon her. 'Wednesday was her at-home day: wouldn't I come?' I just

said, 'Thanks exceedingly; but—ah—you forget I have not even told you my name.' "

Miss Braginton and her sister took their leave now, and the remainder of the visitors drew up their chairs in order to fill up the gap.

The hostess looked around her. "I really think, Miss Diana, you might give us a song it is such a time since I have heard you. Come along now, do!"

She led Miss Bursford over to the piano. As that lady was untying her strings, she whispered to Dorothy, "Who is that pretty, quiet little thing sitting over there?"

"A cousin of mine, my dear."

"Very pretty indeed—very," returned Diana, glancing approvingly at Nellie. "How old might she be, now?"

"Oh, nineteen or so: scarcely nineteen."

"Is that all? Really, now, I'd have said she was twenty-two or twenty-three."

"Humph!" returned Dorothy drily, "I fancy she looks her own age exactly; just like everybody else."

Then she returned to her guests at the fireplace, leaving Miss Bursford to sing that patriotic ballad, "The Wearing of the Green."

"Just like her!" thought Dorothy, rather amused, as she resumed her seat. "She'd make everybody out to look older than they really are; I suppose in the hope to get credit for the same herself. Augh!"

"Dear me!" cried Mrs. Dillon: "'The Wearing of the Green.' Why, we are becoming Fenians altogether!"

"It's quite the rage just now," said Mrs. Bursford. "Everybody has got it."

"Tell me now, Mrs. Bursford," began Miss O'Hegarty, leaning forward and speaking in a low confidential tone, "what's this I hear about Miss Blanche and the O'Gorman Mulcahy? She was saying Hanaper and Diesele—— eh?"

Miss Braginton was a young lady who, owing to a variety of reasons, had been rather long on hand; longer a good deal than her cousin the blonde, Diana Bursford; and between the two there had always been rivalry and jealousy. Blanche Braginton had played a trick or two in days gone by on Diana, which would never be forgiven her, the chief of which was in this wise.

Diana's fortune was only three thousand pounds, and this sum had been magnified

into five by judicious puffing, after the usual custom in Ireland—a veritable land of promise, as far as figures go. There had been seven or eight years ago an Honourable Captain Vesey, who had paid marked attention to Miss Bursford, and who, it was thought, but for some mischief maker, would have married her. Who this mischief maker was had never been openly declared; but the mother of the young lady, after seeing Vesey and Blanche for some time *tête-à-tête* in an ice-room at a Chief Secretary's ball, made up her mind as to the delinquent. Nothing could be proved. Vesey was an embarrassed man, and went to Abyssinia. All his friends declared there never had been anything in it; Diana's complexion quite went off, and she and her mother left for Italy. It was no use attempting open hostilities—the cousins were in the same set; but all the same the offence was never forgotten; and Mrs. Bursford found many opportunities of revenge.

One peculiarity of the amiable Miss Braginton was that she always fancied herself to be the recipient of matrimonial overtures from one or more eligible parties. According to the lady herself, settlements were

eternally in process of being drawn up; but at the last moment the papa or sister interposed, and "the thing was off."

On all these histories Aunt Bursford cast scornful incredulity. Nothing was more amusing to their respective friends than to hear Miss Blanche's accounts, and then to witness the methodical way in which her aunt would sit down and flatly contradict and ridicule every one of her statements. Certainly, for the few months the Brayheads patronized Dublin, Blanche's "engagements," thanks to her aunt Bursford, were the stock diversion of her set.

Mrs. Bursford's eyes kindled, and she shook herself together in her chair. "The O'Gorman Mulcahy! Trash and nonsense! Miss O'Hegarty, how can you imagine for an instant there is anything in it? A man with grandchildren, and mortgaged to the chin. I have no patience with the Bragintons ——"

"Mamma," interposed Mrs. Bursford's daughter, who had finished her song and had returned to her chair; "we don't know, —there may be something in it."

"Now, Diana, don't be absurd; were we not

at Hanaper and Diesele's this very morning? and do you suppose for an instant they would know anything of this and not tell us? O'Gorman Mulcahy indeed!—as if he had not enough encumbrances without taking home a penniless old woman! Blanche is nothing else.” Mrs. Bursford emphasized this statement with a glance at Mrs. Dillon, who she guessed would carry the intelligence to the Mulcahy family, as she was on visiting terms with them.

“How late you are, dear Mrs. O'Hara!” and the hostess welcomed a lady accompanied by two blooming girls—Galway beauties, in town for the season. “Nellie dear, take these young ladies down there, and see if you have a cup of tea for them.”

“You are up for a good while this time, I hope, Mrs. O'Hara,” said handsome Mrs. Hepenstall. “You must excuse me: we dine at the Chief Justice's to-night.” Some of the others followed; and the Bursfords and the last arrivals were almost the only ones left. Peter lighted the chandelier, and drawing the curtains, shut out the cheerless grey evening. The room looked all the brighter and better,

and the fine red cheeks of the O'Hara girls glowed in the clear light of the wax candles.

"What kept you so late, Mrs. O'Hara? and where were you this long time?"

"Shopping, my dear Miss O'Hegarty, for the Cattle Show; buying no end of things."

"Getting everything into campaigning order, hey, Peggy?" cried Miss O'Hegarty, with a meaning nod. "Look out for the Brazilian: he is to be there. How uncommonly well they look, to be sure!" she added, turning to the mother.

"Well, I'm sure it's something to hear of a catch like that," said Mrs. Bursford; "it's not every day Dublin can boast of such *partis*."

"Quite true," assented the Galway matron, with a sigh; "and Dublin is that overdone with girls now, I'm sure if they would only make up their minds to it, they would do far better in the country. I never saw Dublin till I was married."

"I never saw it either," said Mrs. Bursford. "And tell me, Mrs. O'Hara, is this South American really substantial, now? For myself, I prefer something on the spot—it is much more satisfactory, you know."

"I agree with you there," said the hostess ; "but indeed times are changed ; young ladies can't be picking and choosing now, as they did when I was a girl." And the veteran gave a twitch to her cap-strings.

"Indeed they are, Miss O'Hegarty," assented her compeers.

"She must have picked and chosen with a vengeance," murmured the second O'Hara girl, a saucy, black-eyed thing, not quite eighteen.

"Well, I declare!" said Mrs. Bursford, "there are no *partis* now. This new arrival, they say, has a——" (dropping her voice discreetly) "well, a tale—fact—not safe at all. Mrs. Soames had a letter from her son, warning her not to allow the Soames' girls to have anything to say to him. He wouldn't say why. Men never do tell on each other, you know."

"Dear, dear!" said Miss O'Hegarty ; "there's not a good match in the market, I do declare. There's that Saltasche man, to be sure ; I'm sure the conceit of him is wonderful."

"Oh, he's not to be caught!" cried Mrs. O'Hara ; "that fellow won't marry, take my

word for it. His game is playing up to high society. He can't marry there; and if he marries in his own set, he will have to give up his aristocratic tastes. But he 'll never be caught."

"I daresay not. I can fancy his sort from what I've heard of him; and most likely the wretch is married to his cook on the sly."

"I fancied," said Mrs. O'Hara, "that last year he was paying great attention to one of those Fitzharmons of Coolmagrah—cousins of your friend Mrs. Dillon."

"Oh yes, mamma," said Miss Bursford. "Don't you recollect our seeing them all together at Ostend? They had lost a boat, or missed a train, and there they were sitting on top of their trunks."

"Don't I remember it? There were a whole crowd of people; and the Fitzharmons had drawn up their trunks, and were perched on top of them, eating biscuits and talking of the 'Cawstle' at the pitch of their voices. They had Mr. Saltasche with them—most devoted, to all appearance. The boasting and bragging of those Fitzharmons, it was really sickening!"

"Now, really," said Mrs. O'Hara, not without a touch of dry humour in her voice, "I thought it was only the English who went on like that abroad, Mrs. Bursford."

"Indeed, then, I assure you," rejoined Miss O'Hegarty, "wherever you hear loud boasting and bragging on the Continent, be sure our countrymen are not far off."

"Even so, now," maintained Mrs. Bursford, "they never are in the upsetting, dogmatic style of the English: besides, Miss O'Hegarty, the Irish you mean are those would-be English that are always talking of their Norman blood, and would not be Irish *in* Ireland for any consideration. I know them. When they go to England they change their tone, then it's *Ipsis Hibernis Hiberniores*, more Irish than the Irish, with them."

"They want to be Irish aristocracy over there, you may be sure; and so well they may, for it's the only feather in their cap, once they're across the water." And Miss O'Hegarty gave her head an emphatic shake. "And this Mr. Saltasche was doing the civil to the Fitzharmons, you say, Mrs. Bursford?"

"Well, I don't see," said Diana Bursford,

“why Mr. Saltasche should be attentive to those Coolmagrah people, since he has the *entrée* of the houses of people of rank—as we know he has.”

“Ah! my dear,” said Dorothy, “they have business relations together; that’s the reason of the intimacy—if intimacy there be—between him and Lord Brayhead.”

“Intimacy! Miss O’Hegarty. Why, he is a great personal friend of the family. We are to meet him at Brayhead House this day fortnight, and their Excellencies are to be there.” And Miss Diana Bursford looked all round her with an air of superiority.

“Ah!—a dinner. Anybody in the evening?” asked Miss O’Hegarty.

“No,” hastily interpolated Mrs. Dillon—who, though ostensibly engaged in confidential conversation with an old lady on the sofa, lost not a syllable of what was being said, and seized the opportunity to show off to her country neighbour, Mrs. O’Hara, that she was in such a good set—“nobody in the evening. We’re—er—(this was drawled out with an air of affected indifference)—“thinking of going.” She would have died sooner than have missed

the dinner, and was only asked by the Brayheads because of a coming election in their county.

"We met Lord Brayhead to-day, he was talking in the office with Mr. Saltasche and that young barrister, his friend Mr.—ah—ah—O'Rooney—Hogan," said Diana Bursford.

A teacup crashed into its saucer at the other end of the room, where the young girls were together.

"It is not broken, Cousin Dorothy," said Nellie, with a perceptible tremor in her voice.

Impelled by some sudden and irresistible impulse, the girl rose from her place and advanced to the group at the fire. She passed round the back of Miss O'Hegarty's chair under pretext of ringing the bell.

"O'Rooney Hogan," repeated her cousin, trying to remember where she had heard the name before. "R. C., I imagine?"

"Yes," said Miss Bursford; "his uncle is a Bishop, I believe."

"Bishop—hey? R. C. Bishops don't count for much. They're useful relatives, though," returned the old lady, flashing a keen look over her spectacles at Diana.

Mrs. Bursford took out her watch. "Positively six, my dear Diana. Good-bye, Miss O'Hegarty." In a minute or two the room was emptied of the visitors. Miss O'Hegarty took off her spectacles and wiped them, then rose from her chair and yawned.

"Well, Nellie, how did you like them? Tired, eh?" Nellie was pale, and she was looking thoughtfully into the fire. "Do you like your own people best?"

Nellie only smiled in answer; her thoughts were busy with the tall Diana Bursford and Mr. Saltasche. To think of Mr. Hogan knowing these two people!

"Miss Bursford is handsome; and so stylish!" she said.

"Hum—she was better looking. Those blondes fade so. She's a long time on hand now, and would take any one, I do believe. She is quite tired of trapesing about. Bless me—! Harrogate, Brighton, Scarborough,—what hasn't Emily Bursford tried for that girl? Poor Di.!" And the elderly lady smiled half maliciously. "It's very hard for girls to get married in our set," continued she, after a pause. "You can see what they are for your—"

self. Only for her cousins, Di. Bursford would have been married long before. One man to every hundred girls—I do believe that's the proportion—and all the women devouring each other for the sake of him. It's a frightful state of things. Look at those Bragintons : actually their own blood relations are not safe from them. There's no such thing as friendship ; even relations are not friends nowadays ; one has only acquaintances. The struggle for existence has become too keen for it. Really," said she, stooping down to caress a huge black cat which had just taken his place on the rug, "only it's not my nature, I'd turn against society just as Toby does : he's a misanthrope now, is Toby. Sweet old monster! I wonder did Peter give him any dinner?"

"Toby doesn't care for any one," returned Nellie absently.

"He's a misanthrope, my dear," said his owner, "he disappears from my afternoon teas, and never comes back till the last of the visitors is gone."

Nellie now announced her intention of going home. Dorothy's talk jarred upon her nerves, and made her feel fidgety ; and she wanted to be

alone to think over what she had heard. So she set off, escorted by Peter, and in about an hour's time reached Church House. She crept up noiselessly to her mother, whom she found awake and uncomplaining. Mrs. Davoren was anxious to hear all the details of Dorothy's entertainment. So Nellie related everything. The invalid heard her—listlessly enough. When she mentioned the Bursfords' names, her face kindled a little, and her eyes dilated with a fixed bright look. She raised her head a little.

“The Bursfords? Yes. Ah! Emily hasn't married her girl yet. Let me see, Diana is older than Jervis. Yes. She must be thirty-two or thirty-three at least. Was it seventeen or—or——?” But the light faded from the invalid's eyes, the delicate flush paled on her thin cheeks, the memory had lapsed again, and she turned her face away with a petulant and drowsy expression. After a moment or two her eyes fell on Nellie's brooch.

“Where did you get that, dear?” she asked, with a sudden return of interest.

“Oh, mamma,” cried Nellie, eagerly, “Dorothy gave it to me: and, mamma, she

said you knew who gave it to her : Laurence Lentaigne. And she unpinned the little brooch, and put it in her mother's hand."

A bright flush passed quickly over Mrs. Davoren's face, and as quickly faded again. She laid down the little oblong bit of gold with the rows of blackened pearls on its edges.


"Laurie Lentaigne !" she repeated. "I hope it won't prove an unlucky gift, Nellie. Laurence Lentaigne was the name of the man who broke Dorothy's heart nearly thirty years ago."

CHAPTER VIII.

“This was John Scotus Erigena, a very remarkable man, who, as his name imports, and as his contemporaries inform us, was an Irishman, and who appears to have led, for the most part, that life of a wandering scholar for which his countrymen have always been famous. His keen wit, his great and varied genius, and his knowledge of Greek, soon gained him an immense reputation. This last acquirement was then extremely rare; but it had been kept up in the Irish monasteries some time after it had disappeared from the other seminaries of Europe.”—*Lecky*, “History of Rationalism.”

“Thus when, in the middle of the eighth century, an Irish saint named St. Virgilius, who was one of the very few men who then cultivated the profane sciences, ventured in Bavaria to assert the existence of the Antipodes, the whole religious world was thrown into a paroxysm of indignation—St. Boniface heading the attack, and Pope Zachary, at least for a time, encouraging it.”

TWELVE o'clock, or, as it is more often termed, “last” Mass, was greatly crowded on the occasion of Father O’Hea preaching the closing Advent sermon. The reverend father was one of the best preachers in Dublin—in Ireland, perhaps. He was one of the favoured few who are born with the real oratorical talent;



and like most natural geniuses, let those theorists who pretend the divine spark is due to fortuitous circumstances say what they will, had found at an early age his special vocation. Culture and practice had enhanced the precious gift to the utmost ; and Father O'Hea was perhaps at this period without a rival in any part of the world—as regarded his power of attracting hearers.

In a prominent seat near the High Altar was the Lady Mayoress, accompanied by her daughters and her husband's secretary. The Raffertys, gorgeous as usual, were not far removed ; and the sanctuary was crowded with the *élite* of Father O'Hea's admirers and supporters. In a central seat were Dicky Davoren and Nellie, and with them Mr. Mulcahy, now one of Miss Davoren's devoted squires. The Brangans, the Muldoons, the Gogarties,—everywhere he turned his eyes Hogan saw some one whom he knew. Right opposite him was the Bishop ; and from him our young friend, who had come in late, received a reproving glance.

High Mass was sung ; and when the benediction had been pronounced and the silks

and velvets had fluttered and rustled into their seats again, expectant eyes were turned on the vestry door. The organ finished a loud symphony, prayer-books were clasped noisily; and when at last the little door swung open, and the tall figure of the great orator, clad in the picturesque robes of his order, strode forth, a hush of breathless admiration filled the great building. After a moment of prayer before the High Altar rails the priest ascended the pulpit, and, having read the text, commenced his sermon. It was, as usual, a masterpiece. The person and bearing of the speaker lent an additional force to every powerful sentence. His was indeed a remarkable countenance. Burning black eyes looked out from beneath arched, deep-cut brows; eyes that looked all the blacker for the clear, pale olive of the cheeks and forehead; a large, well-shaped and flexible mouth; and hands so apt and skilled of movement that they seemed to speak in unison with the lips.

The greatest charm, however, the most effective weapon in all his well-burnished armoury, was his Irish brogue,—broad, rich, and resonant, lending itself to every mood; now

rising loud in a passionate storm of denunciation, now sinking low as a whisper, yet distinct and clear as a silver bell. No tongue nor dialect, voice nor accent, has the power of an Irish brogue in persuasion or exhortation. At first, the variety of tones, the grotesque cadences and inflections, strike strangely upon an unaccustomed ear; but by degrees the earnest manner and language, the consummate skill with which the subject is presented, appeal to and draw away the attention, the novelty becomes dulled or forgotten, the sympathies are awakened and excited, and the all-embracing enthusiastic sweep of eloquence leads the mind captive.

Hogan, from beside a huge pillar against which he was leaning, looked admiringly at the speaker. Not a gesture escaped his appreciating eye. It was not without a touch of envy that he noted Father O'Hea's triumph. How thin and cold his own outpourings were as compared with this! He consoled himself by the reflection that the religious *genre* of oratory had its special advantages. The fervid burning adjurations of the priest to his flock would be out of place were the audience to

consist of the dozen of thick-headed jurymen ; and above all, reflected the barrister, there was nobody to pull him up in his gallop, no sharp-eyed counsel on the other side to interpose carpings and contradictions. And Hogan leaned back and surveyed the crowd of richly dressed people all intent on every word,—the women now pale, now red, and many of them with tear-filled eyes. He ran his eye quickly along the benches in search of one particular face : up and down each end, beginning with the gas bracket at the top, down to the end at the wall, where hung a gaudy Station picture.

At last Dicky's roving eyes met his with a glance of recognition ; and beside him, in full relief against the dark fur cloak of a lady next her, appeared the clear, cameo-like profile of Nellie Davoren. Her eyes were fixed intently on the preacher. Hogan rapidly noted her dress, in order not to lose sight of her in the crowd going out ; and then, mindful of the Bishop's watchful grey eyes, resumed his pose of edified attentiveness. Father O'Hea's brilliant peroration fell on heedless ears in Hogan's case ; if his eyes were riveted on his face, his ears were listening to other

strains, and instead of the burning words of the preacher, the clear, low voice of Nellie Davoren in imaginative tones filled his whole being.

The sermon over, the entire congregation poured out of the benches and thronged the passages.

The Bishop of Secunderabad, who wanted to join his friend Mrs. Rafferty, executed a dexterous flank movement and came up with that lady's party before they had reached the main door. The Lady Mayoress, who in her turn was being pursued by Mrs. Rafferty, halted for a moment in the porch to greet her friends. Once outside the sanctuary, all tongues were loosened. Hogan and the Davorens joined the party ; the Misses Malowney and Rafferty and their various satellites poured down the steps, laughing and chattering.

"Your ladyship is coming over to lunch with us? It's only just a step. Oh, me lord!—ah, now, Mr. Hogan, prevail on Dr. O'Rooney to come and take a glass of wine." So spoke Mrs. Rafferty, on hospitality intent.

The Bishop was easy enough to persuade, and stepped into the civic coach which was in readiness, accompanied by Mrs. Rafferty and

Mrs. Malowney. Hogan followed on foot with the young people, who all chose to walk; and the Raffertys' great green-and-gold liveried carriage drove off empty.

"Will you go down to the Pier to-day, Eily?" cried Miss Brangan, who rushed across the street to join her friends. She spoke to Miss Eily Rafferty, but at Mr. Dicky Davoren, the "young gentleman with the lovely humbuggin' eyes."

"No, Mary, we can't to-day; you know we must be at home for the people calling after the ball."

"Oh, sure, I forgot. How do you do, Mr. Davoren?"

Dicky had advanced, in gallant acknowledgment of the young lady's glances, to renew their acquaintance.

"How did you like the sermon to-day? Was it not splendid? I saw you were quite moved, Miss Brangan." The collegian had had his eyes about him, and had noted the young lady's total indifference to everything but the bonnets and "young gentlemen of her vicinity."

"Yes, indeed," she answered, with charming candour; "wasn't he lovely? Such an

angel as that Father O'Hea—Oh! I thought I'd ha' died."

"Oh dear! you oughtn't to let your susceptibilities run away with you like that. 'Pon my word, I was alarmed for you, Miss Brangan. Look: by Jove, there goes Father O'Hea himself."

An outside car passed at that moment, carrying the preacher across town to his monastery. He smiled and bowed to the pedestrians.

"He's coming to dinner with us to-day," said one of the Raffertys, in a boasting tone. "Oh gracious! I mustn't forget to practise the accompaniments to the melodies. I disgraced meself intirely last time I played the 'Minstrel Boy' for him."

"Here we are. Come in, Miss Brangan: where's your papa?" Mr. Rafferty led the way in, and the whole troop poured in and up to the drawing-room. Here they found those who had preceded them. Bishop O'Rooney and Mrs. Malowney were seated on a big sofa near the fire; a great many of the guests had also arrived, and conversation became general.

"I hope your ladyship wasn't fatigued after Tuesday night?" asked the lady of the house.

“Deed, no, then; I enjoyed meself so much. I’m never so wearied intirely as when I’ve got to go to them dinners at the Castle. Not but what their Excellencies is kindness itself, an’ everything lovely. Ye had an iligant ball, then, Mrs. Rafferty.”

“I’m really glad your ladyship liked it. I think everybody enjoyed it. It was the greatest pity but your lordship could honour us,” added Mrs. Rafferty jestingly, looking at the Bishop.

“My dancing days are over, ma’am,” returned Dr. O’Rooney, entering into the humour of her joke, with a mock sigh of regret, stretching one neat foot a little in advance. “We leave the young people to do that for us now. We must look on, just,”—and his lordship glanced at the chattering groups behind him. He honoured Miss Davoren with a keen scrutiny from under his brows, while offering a pinch of snuff to Mr. Rafferty. “Might I ask you who is the young lady in grey with the fur jacket?” he asked of his neighbour, dropping his voice discreetly.

“A Miss Davoren. She was here the other night.”

“Davoren?” repeated the Bishop, vainly

trying to connect the name with some half-forgotten reminiscence."

"Her father is in the Castle."

Then the party were marshalled down to lunch, and the Bishop led off the mistress of the house, noting, as he did so, that his nephew was giving his arm to the young lady in grey with the fur jacket, instead of improving his opportunity with the Misses Malowney, Rafferty, or any other of the eligible and advantageous connections in the room.

"Did your ladyship observe the bride at mass?" asked some one of Mrs. Malowney, in the intervals of champagne popping.

"Beautifully dressed, was she not?" interposed a daughter of the house.

"I don' know, thin," said her ladyship deliberately. "I don't fancy that violent coloured bonnet becomes her at all."

"Violet! mamma," shrieked Anastatia Eily, from the opposite side of the table.

"Vi'let, then," repeated her ladyship, dutifully, but with a trace of asperity. "It's all wan as the same."

Hogan's eyes sought Nellie's for a moment ;

and in spite of her efforts to the contrary, a faint flash of amazement escaped hers. Dicky and Mr. Mulcahy jogged each other's elbows and grinned convulsively; but whether it was due to stupidity or politeness, scarce a trace of consciousness was betrayed by the rest of the company.

"Malowney's gone over to London last night," said the Lady Mayoress, in reply to a question of the Bishop's. "Gone on wan of thim depitations."

"Oh yes, to be sure—the depitation. I was wanted to go," said Rafferty pompously.

"'Tis well you were out of it," said his wife; "last night was so stormy and wild."

"'Twas so: God keep us all," piously assented her ladyship. She then finished her *galantine*, and announced her intention of starting, as she had promised to visit a convent out of town.

Hogan, meantime, was dividing his attentions pretty equally between the Raffertys and Nellie Davoren.

"You danced immensely, Miss Malowney; but I really think, Miss Rafferty, *you* went ahead altogether. Poor Mr. Dooley!" Mr.

Dooley was a brother of the gentleman who was to marry Miss Malowney.

"Oh! Aloysia Mary! oh, oh!" and the other young ladies giggled sympathetically.

"How many waltzes, now? just tell us, Miss ——" But here Hogan became aware, from the quick glance that ran round the bevy of girls, and the warning elevation of her eyebrows by the young lady addressed, that he was trespassing on dangerous ground; and he stopped suddenly. Miss Malowney laughed, and glanced up to the Bishop's end of the table; but his lordship was busy with Mr. Rafferty, and heard, or seemed to hear, nothing.

"What matter?" said Dicky Davoren; "we're not his penitents; and Mr. Hogan won't let him tell the 'Car'nal' on us."

"'Tis no sin to dance fast," declared Miss Brangan, emphatically, "when you don't think it a sin; an' I don't."

"Yes; that's the only way to do," affirmed a Miss Malowney; "an' then you don't need to confess it. Father O'Flanagan himself told us he couldn't give us absolution for dancing fast, but if we did not consider it a sin we needn't confess it."

"Capital dodge!" said Dicky approvingly. "Mul., my boy, that's a wrinkle for us. I'll make short work of 'scraping my kettle' next time,"—and the collegians chuckled together.

"Ah!" laughed Hogan; "I must make a note of it too."

Just then the Bishop rose; and Hogan, in duty bound, got up also to accompany him.

"Tell me, ladies, are any of you to be at the concert for the soldiers' widows and orphans next week?" As he spoke, his eyes sought Nellie's with a look of questioning and almost entreaty.

"We won't be there, I don't think," said the eldest of the Raffertys: "isn't it a Protestant concert?"

"What's a Protestant concert?" asked Bishop O'Rooney, on his way to the door, looking questioningly at his nephew.

"I don't know on earth," replied Hogan, speaking to the young lady. "I only saw it advertised. But I fancy it is."

"If the Lord Mayor goes we'll be there,—not otherwise," said Rafferty.

The Bishop and his nephew now left the party. When they got into the street the Bishop proposed a trip to Kingstown for a turn on the Pier before going to the Convent of St. Swithin, where he had to give Benediction, and to whose prioress Hogan owed a visit.

"Just two," said his lordship, consulting his watch. "Let's walk fast and catch the two o'clock; then we shall just have time for a constitutional, and I'll be back by four for Benediction."

They arrived at Kingstown in about half an hour; and taking his nephew's arm, the Bishop started for a smart walk to the Lighthouse. It was a clear grey day—mild, as it sometimes is before Christmas; not a breath of wind curled the water, which lay steel-coloured under the murky sky. Scarce any ships were at anchor; half a dozen dun-coloured fishing-smacks hung windbound out under the cliffs of Howth. The man-of-war lay like "a painted ship upon a painted ocean," and the mailboat getting her fires made down for the evening trip seemed the only thing that gave sign of life. The steam tugs were out in the bay, cruising for customers, Sunday as it was. It was yet too

early for the regular promenaders to appear; except nursemaids and children, and a few of the resident dowagers, who always come down early, to secure good seats, the pier was all but deserted.

They walked on in silence for ten minutes—striding along with the business-like air of men who are taking a walk for the good of their limbs.

Hogan was the first to speak.

“How do you like the Raffertys, sir?”

“Very well indeed,” replied the Bishop in a cordial tone,—“very well; fine house, good style altogether; they seem inclined to be very civil people. The young ladies are better than Assumption gave me to expect.”

“Hah! reverend Mother knows them, then?”

“Of course she does,” returned the Bishop. “She had them all there at school—at least, barring the last two years, when they were sent off to England somewhere. She was very angry at that.”

“The papa and mamma wanted them to get the accent, I suppose?” said Hogan. “They didn’t succeed, if my ears are good for anything: ha! ha!”

"No," said his lordship, with a dry little laugh, "it isn't everybody can improve his opportunities in this life." And he sighed as if the weight of some of his own shortcomings oppressed him. "Assumption thought one of them likely to enter. That second girl—at least, she was when she had her—she told me she had strong hopes of her. 'Twould have been such a good connexion for the convent—and she's a fine musician, I'm told; but that going over to England has changed her entirely."

"Evidently," said Hogan, laughing heartily.

"That little Miss Davoren, now, who's she?" asked the Bishop, in an inquisitorial tone.

"A nice, ladylike little girl," returned the barrister in his most careless voice, looking away across the harbour as he spoke.

"Some of them told me she never was at school at all," went on the Bishop, in a doubting tone, as if that fact were incompatible with the account just given of the young lady by his nephew.

"She sings, and paints beautifully, all the same," returned the young man, with the

slightest touch of impatience. At least," he added, offhandedly, "I'm told so by Mulcahy, who seems quite gone about her."

To this the Bishop made no reply.

Afternoon service was going on as they passed the man-of-war; and the strains of a hymn, sung by some hundreds of men, reached their ears across the water. The Bishop had a musical ear, and but for the bad example of seeming to favour heretical ceremonies, would have stopped and listened for a minute to the fine harmony of the Old Hundredth; but he passed on without paying any attention. Climbing the steps to the top of the wall at the end of the pier, they stood and looked out seawards. Howth, save a faint, shadowy profile, was invisible, wrapped in a pale veil of sea mist. Killiney stood out bare and bleak, all its rocks looking red and cold. No green foliage or sunlight relieved the lines of white and yellow terraces along the bay. Everything seemed leaden, and the sullen rise and fall of the water on the rampart behind them struck with a monotonous iteration on their ears; a damp, chill breeze came across the bay from the north-east. Hogan buttoned up

his coat, and stood a moment viewing the wintry sea before them.

"Time we faced about, my lord," said he, taking out his watch.

"Tell me," said the Bishop, when they had descended to the promenade again, "how goes it with your friend Saltasche? What's he up to since?"

"Nothing particular since, sir. He's getting up a company, with a capital of a hundred thousand, to work Lord Brayhead's slate and granite quarries, somewhere about Leadmines, wherever that is. He wants me to be a director."

"Hey! but the qualifications, sir?"

"Oh, well! a thousand or so is qualification, you see. And I have a precious amount of work to do for them, and may as well take payment in shares as not. That will help to make it up."

"What are the shares issued at?"

"Not settled yet, sir. There's some idea of a railway to be built in that direction. I expect the Bill will be passed next session. It's to run parallel with that one."

"Humbug! Where's the traffic to come

from? That region is almost a desert: I know it well, God knows; I spent ten or twelve years of my life in it." And the Bishop heaved a regretful sigh.

"Whatever the slate company may do, the railway won't obtain, I fear; at least, not in London," said Hogan dubiously.

"No, you might bet upon that. Those English are so jealous of Irish undertakings, they never will subscribe a *sou*."

"Ahem! You know, sir, they have it always to throw at us that we don't manage our railways so as to pay any decent sort of dividend."

"We ain't up to their dodges? No, I suppose not," retorted the inconsequent Bishop, who was incorrigible on some points.

Hogan let this pass. At any other time he would have diverted himself by holding a passage at arms with the old gentleman; but, having drunk two glasses of Mr. Rafferty's excellent dry champagne, he felt the least bit drowsy and good-humoured, and so contented himself with an indolent movement of the chin that might have stood for assent or dissent. They walked on now in silence for a good

stretch of the dry sandy reach. Everything looked dull and cheerless, and Hogan wished himself back at his work by the fireside in Canal Terrace. This was not to be, however; for the Lady Prioress of St. Swithin's had to be visited after the Benediction, and after that came a dinner party at the Muldoons', where there was to be, as usual, a collection of priests, and from which Mr. Hogan would not dare to absent himself.

"If we remain here much longer, my lord," said Hogan, "we shall be encountering our friends; and then, how about the next express?"

"Come along," said his lordship. "Last Sunday I was a full quarter late; an' Assumption hates them to be kept waiting."

They hastened on, and took their seats in a first-class compartment. Scarcely had they done so when a stout short man rushed in after them. "Me dear Bishop, how do ye do? Hogan, I'm delighted to see you. Taking a turn on the pier?" Without waiting for a word, he went on, "Meself was down calling on the O'Gorman Mulcahy; he's at the Marine, in bad health, poor fellow!" Just then the

speaker turned his jolly red face towards the platform, and, catching sight of some one, plunged half out of the window, roaring at the full pitch of his voice, "How are ye, Judge? Come in here, Judge! Room for ye here, Judge! 'Tis Judge Costelloe," he explained in an aside to Hogan and the Bishop, drawing in his head as he did so. This momentary delay was fatal. Another attorney who had also stuck his head out of window to hail the great man was successful, and landed his prize on the seat beside him. Hogan was not sorry for Mr. Muldoon's disappointment. The fellow would have kicked up a frightful row all the way; and Judge Costelloe, a most retiring, quiet man, would have been seriously annoyed. Besides, Hogan preferred to make the personal acquaintance of the Judge through a more aristocratic medium than Mr. Corney Muldoon.

"The Lord Mayor is in London," observed Hogan.

"Ay," said the attorney, "and a deputation with him. Nice little bill there'll be for that journey; and all for a humbug. Look at Lord Ramines: look! look!"

Hogan, who was now sitting at the window opposite Muldoon, cleverly caught the eye of the gentleman referred to, an aristocratic and very dissipated looking man, and was honoured with a nod of recognition as he hurriedly jumped in.

"Do you know him, Mr. Hogan?" asked the attorney, in quite a respectful tone.

The express train darted off with a jolt and scream that hindered Mr. Hogan's answer from being heard very intelligibly; and Muldoon engaged the Bishop in conversation until they reached Westland Row.

"They'll go down with a run, my lord, you may take my word for it," the attorney was saying, as the express slackened speed at the platform.

"You'd advise me sell at once," asked the Bishop in an eager whisper, "hey, Muldoon?"

"Sold me own yesterday afternoon. Stone-lock says there's a fair demand yet."

"Hah," said the Bishop, nodding his head as he took the attorney's arm to get out.

At five minutes past four the Bishop and his nephew drove up to the wide green gate of St. Swithin's. The green gate had a sliding panel set in it; and after they had rung at one

of the small doors by which it was flanked, the face of a nun appeared at this, and smiling pleasant recognition to the visitors, speedily unlocked and held open the door for them to pass in.

“Day, day, Veronica : how’s your tooth-ache?” said the Bishop. Sister Mary Veronica, a jolly-looking lay sister, plumped down on her knees and kissed the Bishop’s ring before answering. She was the lay sister whose duty it was to wait on him at breakfast, and open the hall door and the gate ; consequently they were well acquainted with each other.

“Mr. Hogan, I’m very glad to see you. Reverend Mother will be so delighted !” And she laughed and chuckled as if she had uttered the best joke in the world. Then she turned and led the way across the front to the hall door.

How quiet and still and grey it all was ! Hogan asked himself, could it be the same house that he had seen last summer ? The big stone convent looked bleak and cold ; the yellow blinds were all pulled down, no gas lighted yet, and only the red flickering of the

fires showed at some of the ground-floor windows. A narrow grass plot, bordered by a walk which was planted with stiff evergreens and rows of chesnuts, was before the house. A double row of poplars, now bare and wintry-looking, in summer screened the wall which ran all round and kept out "the world" and all inquisitive eyes. Behind were the gardens, and another small patch, gravelled, but planted with trees, and furnished with swings and poles, which served as a recreation-ground for the children.

They reached the hall door, which was half glass and neatly curtained with white muslin. Veronica opened it, and ran off to announce their arrival and ring the bell for Benediction. His lordship plunged down a dark passage leading to the vestry; and Hogan, taking a tiny ivory-bound prayer-book out of his pocket, went by another route to the convent chapel.

A bell began to clang noisily. The scuffling and whispering of the boarders could be heard as they hastened to assemble in order of procession. Dark-robed figures flitted past in the dim twilight—the rattle of the huge

rosaries alone betraying their presence. A little nun ran by, swinging a big thurible newly kindled from one of the parlour fires, and leaving a long stream of aromatic odour behind her. They had reached a big door set in a white sharp-pointed arch. Sister Veronica appeared with her office-book in her hand, and opened it; and Hogan entered. Beside the door, on the inside, stood a white-winged figure holding back with one hand a red velvet curtain which hung before the door, and in the other presenting a vase of holy water. Hogan dipped in a finger, and then, without turning an eye to the right or the left, took his place in the topmost of the three benches reserved for strangers.

The chapel, a small structure of Gothic style, and exactly proportioned, was exceedingly pretty; and the stained windows admitted a soft, rich light which set out its beauties admirably. The walls were painted cream-colour. The gilded frames of the pictures, and the deep crimsons of the carpet, and the richly-worked *priedieu* chairs, gave it a warm and comfortable look. The altar, of Carrara marble, beautifully carved and inlaid, was decked

with superb bronze candelabra, the gift of a wealthy convert. These were filled with wax candles, which the sacristan sister was busily lighting ; vases of wax flowers filled the spaces between the candles, and the jewelled monstrance lay ready on the snowy altar-cloth. The Bishop's faldstool stood at one side ; and an embroidered cushion marked the place of the officiant at the foot of the altar. The organ began the instant the vestry door opened, and the fresh voices of the nuns and children rose together in the hymn. A few old ladies who were boarding in the house were the only lay persons in the chapel—the children being sequestered in a gallery above the enclosure railed off for the nuns.

The little chapel was warm and close ; and Hogan laid down his head on his hands and yawned to his heart's content. He could with difficulty keep his eyes open ; and the thick white incense that rose from the thurible was almost stifling. The ceremony did not last long, however. The Bishop, though dignified in his movements, was anything but slow ; and in something less than twelve minutes Hogan found himself in the reverend Mother Prioress's

own private parlour. Here there was a magnificent fire blazing; and Sister Veronica fussily lighted the gaselier, and with vast clatter produced from a cupboard wine-glasses, decanters, and cake. The Bishop made his appearance ere long from an opposite door, and installed himself in a cozy easy-chair by the fireside.

"My word, Veronica," said he, rubbing his hands, "that is a fire you have!"

"And what an exquisite fireplace you keep, sister!" said Hogan, admiring the brilliancy of the cut-steel fittings: "not a speck of dirt, even in the corners."

"Dirty corners is velial sins," cackled Veronica, running to open the door for the reverend Mother, whose familiar footstep she heard outside.

"Hah! are they? I wish people 'in the world' thought so," returned Hogan, thinking of the contrast presented by his own fireplace.

The Mother Superior now entered. The cold weather agreed with her, and gave her a fine healthy colour. She was a tall woman, as we said before, and her trailing Sunday robes

gave her an immense look of dignity. She had a merry, cheerful face, with keen grey eyes—the O’Rooney eyes exactly; bushy brows, and large white teeth gleaming in a wide mouth, which seemed always smiling, but which could wear a determined look at times.

“My lord!” and down she too plumped on her knees: a most aggravating practice. “John, my dear child: ah now! and where were you this long time?” and the Prioress shook him by both hands affectionately. “Dear bless us—what a settled-looking man you’re growing!”

“Hard work! ma’am. You look very well; blooming, indeed.”

“Hum—thank God, I am. I haven’t time to be ill. A great school we have now. I got eight new pupils to-day,—all from the country. Three Miss Sheas, from Peatstown. It’s a great affair. They’re taking every extra.”

“Every extra—ho, ho!” said the Bishop approvingly; well knowing what a sum the innumerable list of accomplishments would total up.

"When are you going to take my advice, and make them all learn Latin and mathematics?" asked Hogan; "what will they do with wax flowers and the use of the globes down in Peatstown?"

"Latin, John!" returned her reverence with a little scream; "augh now, Jig Polthogue would be more in their line a great deal."

"Indeed! why teach them Italian, then, ma'am?" returned he pertinently.

"Give them just what their parents want, I suppose," said the Bishop curtly; "what business further is it of ours?"

"Their parents don't know anything about it: how should they? And you, ma'am, ought to supply the best market value, and the most modern improvements you can hear of, in return for their money. You 'll be sorry for not doing it, some of these days. See if you are not."

"Such trash as you talk, John!" interrupted the Bishop. "What do they want with all this education? What the better would one of them be for Latin, indeed? Let them say their prayers: plenty good enough for them."

"If that's so," retorted Hogan, a little crossly, "why does Mother Assumption pretend to teach them anything but their prayers? It would certainly be cheaper for them."

"Now, John dear, you're talking of what you don't know; 'pon my word you are," began the Prioress gravely. "Father O'Hea himself told me our language classes were better than those of any other convent school in Dublin. And as for music, why, we are renowned for music. My dear boy, you don't know what other schools are. And Protestant schools too. I assure you a great many of the best class Protestant schools are not nearly as good as we are."

"Pardon me, ma'am," said the barrister, laughing heartily, "you are entirely behind the times. How is it that the best-class Catholics are sending their daughters to these new Ladies' Colleges and High Schools, to learn Latin, Greek, and mathematics, and sciences of all sorts? Why don't *you* go in for South Kensington examinations and Trinity College classes? Why have the convents fallen from their old ideal? They used to be the homes of learning and culture. Your curriculum,

ma'am, is little better than a swindle, and it will be a bad job for you when your supporters find that out."

"I declare to goodness," cried the Bishop, "this fellow has gone mad. Latin and Greek and mathematics for a pack of girls, indeed! What would the world come to then, I'd like to know?"

"Ah," said the Prioress, good naturedly, "he doesn't mean it. I got a new postulant last week, she continued: one of our own children come back to us."

"Who?" asked Hogan.

"Mary Anne Kellett. She could not exist till she was let back to us, the darling child."

"Is that Kellett's daughter, of Rathboy Farm?" asked Hogan of the Bishop; "if so, she ought to have money."

"Yes,—the same. I'm glad she came, poor thing. She never could be happy with them at home: a rough lot!"

"If her father and mother are rough, why should she be less rough? How comes that, Mother Assumption?"

"Because," returned the Abbess, "she got a nice education, and was refined and im-

proved; and she chose to enter instead of remaining at home."

"Bah! ma'am; she had] no business to be refined and improved beyond her station in life. You are doing the most horrid mischief throughout the country. There's not a useful hard-working girl left, with your refining and improving them,—improving them off the face of the earth."

"There's always women enough," said the Bishop crossly; "and too many, for that matter. At the same time, I'll allow you carry off the best of them into the convents here. Anyhow, it's God's will, else they wouldn't think of it."

"Of course it is," assented the Prioress.

Between the Prioress and the Bishop there was this difference :—He considered that Catholic girls had a mission in life as well as being nuns. He held it right and suitable, in a religious as well as a social point of view, that they should marry—a certain number of them at least; although, of course, as a Churchman, he considered marriage to be an evil—a necessary evil—a concession made to the exigencies of poor fallen human nature. But the Prioress considered it to be an entirely unnecessary

one, to be avoided as much as possible—a wholly inferior and condemnable state as compared with the religious life: in fact, the mere name of it was unfit to be breathed without a proper little shudder of revulsion—a little fluttering of the dove-like wings of immaculate and over-conscious purity. Mother Assumption, to do her justice, did indeed sometimes think of the institution of matrimony as being in some remote way connected with the perpetuation of her flourishing boarding-school. Like many another enormity, it tended, no doubt, to the furtherance of that scheme best expressed by the legend inscribed over her gates, "*Ad maiorem Dei gloriam!*" and so was to be tolerated and almost condoned.

"How are you getting on, John?" asked she. "It was very thoughtful of you to send me the paper with that report of your speech in it. I never see a paper, you know, unless some one sends one with something in it of interest to the community." Mother Assumption loved a newspaper—in secret.

Those modern luxuries are not generally allowed in convents. However, as they were not known at the periods when Saints Do-

minic, Bernard, Francis, Teresa, and other founders of communities flourished and drew up their respective rules and codes of observances, they escaped being placed on the index of forbidden indulgences. And consequently, if somewhat irregular, it is not an absolutely sinful relaxation for a nun to read one.

"I must send you a *Graphic*, ma'am," returned the barrister. "Indeed, I ought to have done so before."

"Ah! yes, now, for the Christmas holidays. The children will be so glad of the pictures."

Her reverence did not add that she would be so glad of the stories which usually go with the said pictures. But her cousin was aware of her proclivities, and good-naturedly promised a stock of the usual Christmas effusions.

"Now, you promised to select a list of books for the library for me, John. There's not a day but what I have girls here asking me, may they read this book or that book? and how am I to know what to recommend them? And of course, except the mistress of the schools, and she has no time, there's nobody in the house knows anything about books but myself."

"I'm sure, reverend Mother, I sent you a bundle not long ago. It seems to me you read them up like winking."

"Read them, John! I am astonished at you! I only skim through them, just to see if they'll do for the children."

"Of course, Mother Assumption," answered the barrister in the gravest of tones, nevertheless with a noticeable compression of his lips. "Well now, let us see," proceeding to jot down in his pocket-book. "Let's see: you have the first, second, and third of 'Middlemarch.' How do you like that for the children?"

Mother Assumption paused.

"It's a lovely book—oh, most lovely! But somehow the religious part doesn't come out clear enough; an' still, I don't know—there's many a worse and a more foolish book."

"Well, yes," agreed Hogan dryly; "I should say so. All the same, ma'am, I suppose I must send you the fourth volume?"

"Oh yes, John, if you please;" and the Abbess looked as if she would be pleased very much. "See, here's a list I've been given; you might send those round at your convenience."

"What's 'Middlemarch,' eh?" asked the Bishop of Secunderabad, who was sipping his glass and warming his feet at the fire. "Eh! who's it by?"

"George Eliot, sir," replied Hogan.

"Hah!" said the Bishop, as if the name were quite familiar to him. "I don't know any of his works."

"Is it true the Prime Minister of England is going to be 'received'?" asked the Prioress, changing the subject adroitly.

Hogan looked at her in utter amazement, almost doubting his ears; but the Bishop, who knew what was expected of them, replied quite seriously,—

"I heard, on very good authority, that he and all his family, barring the wife, were converted by Monsignor Capel; but it's kept quiet just at present. It wouldn't do, you know, to make it public, on account of Parliament being just going to sit."

"Glory be to God!" ejaculated her reverence piously. "Now, would the most part of the House of Commons follow his example, if that turns out true?"

"Well," said Hogan quite gravely, "they

are very much attached to him : but I doubt if their affection goes quite so far as that. My lord, is it not time we were off ? ”

“ Now don’t go yet,” entreated the Prioress ; “ it’s three months since I saw you. Ye never told me one word of the grand ball.”

“ Ah ! ” replied her nephew laughing, “ you know as much about it this minute as I do, Mother Assumption.”

“ No such thing, indeed ! ” returned she, repudiating the allegation with scorn. “ There were a few here, to be sure, that were at it.” She knew every dress that had been seen there perfectly. “ But how did you get on ? ”

“ First-rate, ma’am ; grand affair.”

“ Augh,” growled the Bishop, “ don’t lose your time, Assumption, talking to him about low business people like the Lord Mayor of Dublin and that Rafferty lot. Mr. Hogan is got above them entirely, so he is. Nothin’ less than me Lord Ramines and me Lord Brayhead, the swaddler, will content him these times.”

Mother Assumption knew the origin and history of this little innuendo nearly three

weeks back. The Bishop was chaplain to her convent; and every morning, while he ate breakfast in her parlour after eight o'clock mass, she came down to hear all the news and exchange information with his lordship. Veronica was first, she having the pleasant task of waiting on him; and by the time his lordship had finished his cutlet and had poured out his second cup of tea, Reverend Mother had eaten her meagre breakfast in the refectory, and came to relieve Veronica and send her to the lay sisters' table.

She turned her big grey eyes with an expression of mock horror on her cousin. "Augh now, John dear—ah now!"

The gentleman thus adjured, seeing precisely the state of affairs, was ready to burst with laughter; but he wisely concealed his merriment, and shrugging his shoulders, made answer in a lackadaisical, helpless sort of tone.

"I can't help it, Mother Assumption. What would you have? I suppose the next thing to please his lordship and you will be that I am to refuse every brief I chance to be sent from a Protestant attorney's office. People like me can't pick and choose, my dear lady."

"Take a glass of sherry, sir," said his lordship, who had been helping himself not from the decanter of sherry, but from a queer-looking little roundabout glass jar, bearing on a silver chain and label fastened to its neck the inscription "whiskey."

"No, no. I must be off. I have to dress for dinner. Good-bye, reverend Mother! I won't forget 'Middlemarch' and the list at Kelly's." And Hogan, delighted to make his escape, rang the bell for the jocund Veronica and went his way.

"Dear, dear!" said the Bishop, mounting his neat feet on the fender, "how well he's getting on these times! I'm terribly afraid though, Assumption, those swell Protestants may be leading him into—ah, hum—God knows what."

"Surely your lordship has no fear of him losing his faith?" returned the reverend Mother, with a look of genuine anxiety on her face.

"Not that—not that alone; but he's making remarks and turning up his nose and fault-finding with these friends of yours, the Raffertys. Ye see that's always the way. If girls go into Protestant society, oh,

nobody's so nice and genteel and refined as Protestant young gentlemen ; and then here's John, the same : the refinements and the niceness of the Protestant young ladies ! ” And the Bishop pursed up his lips and shook his head in a melancholy foreboding way.

“ Well, I'm sure he has no reason to fault-find with the Rafferty girls. They'd every extra and everything here, and then off in England for the accent. What can he be thinking of, at all ? ” The Prioress spoke in an aggrieved, half-lachrymose tone. “ Did he see Mary Brangan, now ? She's a splendid girl, and so beautifully dressed ! ”

But the Bishop raised his eyebrows, and by a gesture of his face testified to the Prioress that even Miss Brangan had failed to impress his obdurate nephew. Then, after a pause, with the easy happy-go-lucky philosophy belonging to his disposition, he added, in a more cheerful tone,—

“ God will provide. We must accept our lots, and just pray on. Anyhow,” he added, “ John had always a great taste for getting on in life.”

“ Indeed, then, 'twon't be for want of prayers. Sure that lamp is always on St.

Gabriel's oratory for him—him and old Mrs. Doolin together," added the Prioress, who, though a good woman of business, certainly was scrupulous and conscientious. "He attends the *saw*crament regularly, doesn't he?" she added in an anxious tone.

"Oh yes," replied the Bishop; "though I believe it is *say*craments he calls them nowadays."

Who would believe the enormous difference that lies in the pronunciation of the first syllable of that word? By *sā*crament is understood the Protestant communion; while *să*crament expresses the great fundamental dogma of the Catholic Church. Volumes would not suffice to recount the religious, social and nationalistic differences summed up in the mere accentuation of that one syllable.

Mother Prioress seemed to be impressed by this intelligence, as well she might. The bell rang now for Divine Office; and she took her leave, while the Bishop also departed to dine with a country family in Mount-joy Square.

CHAPTER IX.

“ Ein garstig Lied ! Pfui ! ein politisch Lied !
Ein leidig Lied ! Dankt Gott mit jedem Morgen
Dass ihr nicht braucht fürs röm'sche Reich zu sorgen.
Ich halt' es wenigstens für reichlichen Gewinn
Dass ich nicht Kaiser oder Kanzler bin.
Doch muss auch uns ein Oberhaupt nicht fehlen,
Wir wollen einen Papst erwählen.”—*Faust.*

LORD BRAYHEAD possessed a town house, which he inhabited for a few months in the early spring of each year,—for the Dublin season, in fact, which is over when that of London commences, or nearly so. St. Patrick's Ball, given on the night of that “immovable” Feast, closes the Castle festivities. The Viceroy and his family usually take wing for London, and the big “whiskey men” and a few—a very few—of the set remain to keep the ball rolling in Dublin. The Roman Catholics are all “fasting” and “abstaining,” and longing for Easter to remove their disabilities.

For these few months Lord Brayhead entertained hospitably enough. His circle was

tolerably wide—embracing the Castle set (the private circle, of course, understood),—the Viceroy, his family and acquaintance generally. Then there was the usual *filling*: the Castle officials, the commander of the forces, the Lord Mayor, the provost of Trinity, bishops, chaplains, surgeons, and physicians in ordinary and extraordinary, legal dignitaries,—all these were to be met at Brayhead House. There were not many of them; and the “deadly lively” (as Wyldoates, the larky aide-de-camp, styled them) entertainments were pretty generally the same; except that the dishes varied with the seasons, while the guests were the same always—at least, while the Government remained unchanged. If the Whigs or Tories went out, of course there was a novelty in the way of Viceroy, Lord Chancellor, and so on.

The first levee and drawing-room of the season had been held. Dublin was full of county people, and the hotels and lodgings were all crowded. Court milliners advertised for additional hands, and the shops were thronged all day by fresh-cheeked purchasers. Stout bucolic gentlemen, addicted to plaid

trouserings and to the distinctively provincial habit of staring about them in the streets, tried to kill time in Grafton Street, and wandered from one club to the other. The Courts were all sitting, too, and everybody seemed on the alert. Country witnesses lounged about the quays—shopkeepers and farmers dragged from their avocations in the busiest season, in accordance with the abominable centralized legal system of this country.

Hogan was passing hurriedly one afternoon from the Court of Probate to that of Common Pleas, in obedience to the summons of an attorney, when he felt his arm grasped by some one. Turning round, he found Mr. Saltasche, on whose arm was leaning a tall, elderly man, whose little sunk steel-blue eyes were bent scrutinizingly on him.

"How do you do, Mr. Hogan?" said Saltasche. "Allow me to present you to Lord Brayhead. We heard you speaking just now. I congratulate you on your success."

Hogan bowed low. He was puzzled by Saltasche's manner. Then Lord Brayhead, seeing a couple of people beckoning at a doorway, observed, after a remark or two,—

"Do not allow us to detain you, Mr. Hogan. Mr. Saltasche can finish my errand for me."

"*Fiat justitia!* my lord," said Hogan; "I need not offer any excuse,"—and hastened away; not, however, until Saltasche had engaged him to call on him the same afternoon at his office. Then the nobleman and his companion remained alone.

"What do you think of him, my lord?" asked Saltasche, placing himself so as to look straight into his companion's face.

"H'm: he is much better than I had anticipated; much better—gentlemanlike, rather, and of good address. You say he is a Romanist. I should hardly have thought that. I am—er—pleasantly surprised."

"Oh, yes: nephew to some bishop, I believe. Oh! quite one of that party. Owes everything to them, and is bound to them altogether."

"Dear, dear!" almost groaned his lordship, standing still; and looked around him with an air of bewilderment. "It might, perhaps, be better to drop the idea."

"You cannot do without *some one*, my lord,"

said the broker emphatically, "in the place of Mr. Wyldoates; and if not well managed, this seat may be lost utterly to you. Besides, we shall hold this man." And the broker looked significantly at his companion.

"True, true. How much would it cost? Have you endeavoured to ascertain?"

"How much? Well, there is a parish priest there, I'm told; nothing less, between him and the Convent, than a cool hundred will suffice; maybe more will be required: and that's only one item. To be sure, there are loads of other things, too. And you see it is not so long off dissolution; which must be considered in the case of Mr. Hogan. A man may like to spend his money when he has seven years before him to enjoy his purchase; but with a general election to come on in a year or two, it's a risky thing."

"The Liberals are in possession altogether, it seems to me," said Lord Brayhead. "I don't believe we have a chance against them. The country never was so Whig before: look at the majority they hold. They think themselves that nothing can upset them. Ruinous state of affairs."

"Quite so, indeed," assented the broker, who was not attending to a word. "I think, now, seven or eight hundred pounds should do the business. If there's no opposition? The Conservatives will hardly think it worth wasting powder on. And if he goes in on Home Rule and the Education question, with his connections in the clerical line, I can't see any danger of the priests supporting anybody else. I think, too, if properly represented to them, the Reform Club would come down with something."

"Of course, Mr. Saltasche, my name never appears; and you will undertake to bring Mr. Hogan round to our mutual views cautiously. I shall see you both to-night."

Saltasche opened the door of the brougham, which was in waiting at the entrance of the Law Courts, for his client, and watched him drive off with an amused smile on his lips. "What an old fox!" thought he. "He'll pay every penny, unless our friend here be more fool than I take him for," ruminated he. "Poor old Wyldoates must really be dying; begad, it will be a lift to young Hogan. Who the deuce is this?" And Mr. Saltasche bent

his sharp eyes on a couple of people advancing in his direction. "Poignarde, and the—yes, —the wife, no doubt."

The military man whom we met before in Mr. Saltasche's office now approached. Beside him walked a young woman, not tall, and very slight of figure, dressed in a close-fitting black costume, with a thick veil over her face, through which a clear ivory skin shone more lustrous by the contrast, and which in no way marred the brilliancy of a pair of almond-shaped, hazel eyes. She was walking along in silence, and with a listless air and step—Captain Poignarde seeming engrossed in his cigar. Saltasche caught his eye; and the pair halted simultaneously.

"Captain Poignarde, how do you do?"

"Adelaide: Mr. Saltasche—my wife."

Mrs. Poignarde bent her lithe figure in the least perceptible acknowledgment, and raising her white eyelids a quarter of an inch, met the appreciating glance of the well-dressed man of the world, who was bowing before her, with cool equanimity. Saltasche had been told she was lovely and young; but he, having a standard of his own, paid

but little attention to reports. While acknowledging the churlish introduction of her husband, he ran his critical eye over her; veiled, and plainly dressed as she was, he saw enough to cause him the greatest astonishment.

"Nineteen or twenty," thought he, "and clean bred. What a set her head has!" and his practised eye in one moment took in every detail and line of her form.

"Ah, Captain," said he, reproachfully, "you never came back that day we settled, you remember. Mrs. Poignarde, your husband is a sad man of business."

Not a word she spoke in reply, only flashed a glance from him to the gallant youth beside her, who, holding with one lemon-coloured gloved hand his cigar, with the other tugged his whiskers, vainly endeavouring to grasp the purport of what had been said. His wife evidently relished the situation.

"A man of business!" she said at last. "Business!—the idea of Eric and business. What was it?" And she laughed, with a ring of malicious amusement in her voice.

He turned round a sulky countenance upon

her. Saltasche, watching every stir, noted the scornful curl of the short upper lip.

"A trifle," answered Saltasche, airily; "nothing worth remembering or talking about. Any time will do," he added, looking significantly at Poignarde, who returned the glance by a meaning nod.

"Mrs. Poignarde, your friend Mrs. Grey, the chaplain's wife, has been a neighbour of mine, at Green Lanes, for some time back. Has she told you that a concert is proposed for the Soldiers' Widows' and Orphans' Home situated near us?"

"I recollect. Yes," said she, indifferently; "she did speak of something of that kind."

"It is to be exclusively amateur; and you sing, don't you?" He was watching her closely as he spoke.

"Sing?—no." And she looked at him with wide-opened eyes.

"Are you sure? I'm certain I was told of your singing so well. Captain Poignarde, I must appeal to you;" and Saltasche turned to the husband.

"Don't know, 'm sure," drawled he. "She plays."

"You must hear more about it. I know you can help them; and the committee are absolutely lost for a really good performer. Oh, I won't allow you to refuse. I'll send and tell you all about it."

She threw back her head, and looked at him with an inimitable air of half bewilderment, half haughtiness. Saltasche coolly returned this with a look of the most expressive, intense admiration. A car was passing, and he signalled the driver by a wave of his hand.

"May I set you down anywhere, Poignarde? Mrs. Poignarde, will you allow me?"

"We're going home Park way," nodded the husband.

Mrs. Poignarde vouchsafed not the slightest attention; and with a distant salute from her, they separated.

Saltasche, as he drove towards the Bridge, turned and watched the two retreating figures—the man slouching along by the curbstone, puffing at his cigar, and vacantly turning his head from right to left at everything that passed; she erect and well set up, walking with a firm step, and never heeding, apparently, a single person or thing on either side.

Not a word evidently was exchanged between the couple; for the woman, or girl rather, walked along as if unconscious of her companion's presence. Nor was it until the car had turned a corner, and was quite out of sight, that she looked at her companion, and broke the silence between them.

"Eric—I say, Eric—was that the stock-broker Anstruther sent you to?"

"Yes: an awfully rich fellow; no end of a swell. I say, if you're asked to play for them, what do you intend to do?"

"Do?—I don't know. I am not asked yet."

"You'd better decide, then, and at once," grumbled he, in a bullying tone.

"Listen, Eric," she said, indifferently. "I don't intend to be controlled by you in my few amusements. I don't interfere with you; so let me alone."

"I'd like to see you, that's all—damn you."

And so this happy couple strolled home.

The hours sped on till evening. Lord Brayhead got through a heavy day's work of committee meetings, boards of governors, and such like. He visited an English railway

magnate at the "Bilton," and from him got the name of a firm of engineers and railway contractors. Altogether, he felt, as his carriage rolled eastward through Merrion Square, on its way to Brayhead House, that he was considerably nearer the object of his ambition.

It was now dark ; the grey wintry day had closed rapidly, and a biting frosty air made all the lights sparkle with unusual brilliancy. Brayhead House, a huge red-brick corner house, standing, like some of the fine Paris houses, *entre cour et jardin*, with a splendid granite *porte-cochère* and massive iron gates and railings, showed an unusual excitement. The double doors were open, and a crimson carpet ran down the wide steps. The servants were rushing about, all in their dress liveries of claret and gold. The hall was heated with great stoves placed beneath the staircase. White marble statues gleamed among stands of hothouse plants ; and camellias, like trees, their stems hidden in masses of maidenhair fern, stood everywhere masking the walls.

A second hall was divided by a velvet curtain, held back at either side by a beautiful marble figure. The staircase was carved

oak ; and off the drawing-room lobby was a conservatory, filled with spring flowers ; great pots of pale narcissus, Russian violets, and hyacinths of every hue. The sweet fresh scent penetrated to the drawing-rooms, where the maids were busy giving the final touch to everything.

His lordship stalked gravely up the staircase until he reached his dressing-room. Here he rang the bell ; and, after giving some orders to the servant who answered the summons, went to his wife's room.

Lady Brayhead was in the hands of her maid, a grim Abigail, who left the room in obedience to a look from his lordship. Standing with his back to the fire, he waited for a minute without speaking.

"That invitation you despatched last night, Sophronia ?"

"Yes, Lord Brayhead," responded she meekly, crossing her thin chilly fingers in her lap.

"Did the answer come from Mr. Hogan this morning, or this afternoon ?"

"Mr. Hogan sent an acceptance by the midday post."

"Good. Sophronia! I desire you will be attentive to him; I have particular reasons for it."

"Is it true, my lord, that this young man is—a Romanist?"

To this question his lordship replied with a stiff inclination of his chin; and as he moved away slowly from the fire, added, as though prompted by an after-thought:

"I desire you will convey my wishes to your nieces in this matter also."

"Certainly, since it is your wish." And the countess wrapped herself in her swansdown *peignoir*.

She was a little old woman of sixty, with a perpetual red nose, and pinched-up, wintry little face. In the hottest day of midsummer it was her peculiarity to look cold. She was rather Low Church in her religious views; Conservative, of course, like her lord; and like him, too, abominating Roman Catholics. Ritualists she held in a horror second only to that she entertained for the Scarlet Lady herself. She was a soured woman. Of her two sons, her favourite, the second, had not lived to grow up, and the eldest, Lord Greystones,

had never agreed with his father, and lived always abroad. There was a rumour, too, of his having made a low match with a barmaid, or some one even more disreputable still; and his name was never mentioned at all.

The Brayheads were not held of much account in London. The Earl was a stupid man, pig-headed and narrow-minded. He liked dabbling in business, and to be the great man of a Board of Directors or a Committee of Managers. It gave him a little importance in his own eyes. People said, too, that the guineas were an attraction. A good sort of vestryman, in short. He had never taken any part in politics, or come to the front in any useful way; and they were not rich enough to hold a prominent position in London society by virtue of their entertainments or disbursements alone. They might, had Lord Greystones been so minded, have been accounted of some use and importance through him. The heir to an earldom and sixteen thousand a year confers a vast weight of responsibility and value on his family generally. They are noticed, flattered, and made much of for his sake; and if he fails, on the

other hand, to come up to the public estimate and expectations, his family are pretty sure to be made bear the weight of the disappointment. It had been so with the Brayheads. However, London and Dublin are quite different; and a very second-rate personage in London may become a corner-stone of the social edifice in the Irish capital.

Dinner was appointed at eight, and their Excellencies were expected. Lady Brayhead was connected with the Lady Lieutenant's family; and at ten minutes to eight the hostess and her nieces, the Misses Braginton, took up their position in the drawing-room. After a while the company began to pour in—the Lord Chancellor and his lady, a brace of judges and their wives, the physician in ordinary, a couple of dowagers, a few country gentlemen, the provost, and a dean celebrated in the world of letters, but asked solely on account of his family name. Lord Brayhead, though he had written a book of unexampled stupidity, considered literature as the last of the professions. Miss Bursford and her mother arrived at the same moment with Mr. Saltasche and Hogan. The Bragintons in-

stantly seized on Saltasche. "*Nil desperandum*" was the family motto; and Miss Blanche had already planned her assault on this fortress.

Conversation went on pretty smoothly. The fact of their Excellencies being expected gave a fillip to the spirits of the guests. Her ladyship, in peach velvet and silver, with little bunches of wispy, blonde curls on each side of her face, twittered little insipidities to a grave judicial dignitary standing beside her. The physician in ordinary was talking to a deaf dowager through a trumpet, and cudgelling his brains for some news for her. The Lord Chancellor, who had met the Chief Justice of Appeal the day before at the Castle dinner, and who was to meet him the next day at the Chief Secretary's, was exchanging some commonplaces about a street accident with his brother dignitary. An agrarian outrage was the prevailing topic; and one of the bucolic contingent, a Mr. Fitzharmon Dillon, was holding forth loudly on the generally seditious aspect of rural affairs to Saltasche, who hardly had made up his mind which was the most in-

tolerable—the fascinating *minauderies* of Miss Braginton, or the pompous twaddle of the J.P. Mr. Fitzharmon Dillon was one of that class of Irish gentry who would have it to be believed that they are suffering all the woes of exile by being condemned to live in their native country. They take care always to speak of it as “this country,” in the tone Burton or Stanley might use in describing Zanzibar or Unyanyembe.

“The idea, my dear sir, that in a country calling itself civilized, in the—ah—nineteenth century, I am obliged to keep two policemen in my own house! Daren’t stir without their protection.” And he paused and looked round for admiration and interest. A county gentleman buried in his estate for eight months out of the twelve is obliged to make the best of his little opportunities. It is not everybody that is honoured with a threatening letter; and people have little idea of the importance conferred by being the recipient of one of these missives. It is, positively, the next thing to being fired at; and raises a man enormously in his own and public estimation. Mr. Fitzharmon Dillon

had frequent interviews with the editor of *The Daily Alarmist*, who was forcing the Coercion Bill on the notice of the Government.

Saltasche was not unacquainted with the variety, and listened with an expression of compassionate deference.

"Dreadful position, indeed; dreadful, dreadful!" And he had to smile in return, as he spoke, in reply to Miss Blanche's *œillade*.

"Last year, after nightfall, every shutter had to be closed immediately. A mere glimmer of light, and we might have lost our lives."

"Why didn't you go away to London, Mr. Dillon?" asked Diana Bursford, who was sitting close by, speculating wearily as to her probable partner at the dinner-table, and inwardly praying that the Bragintons, contrary to their customary good-natured practice, would have forgotten to put her down to a married man, or some useless "detrimental."

Poor Miss Bursford! her opportunities were not to be wasted now. Who would think that under the cold, well-bred, smiling manner there lay such a torrent of disgust, contempt, and

fierce self-upbraidings? She looked round and round the room; noted with a sneer that ancient man-hunter, Blanche Braginton, playing off all the well-worn tricks in her repertory on the tough hide of Cosmo Saltasche; then noted the sofa, where a couple of women, well-dressed and dull, were keeping up a feeble trickle of small talk with some dining-out professional; Lord Brayhead, wooden as usual, on the hearthrug, and the place of honour vacant as yet for the Lord Lieutenant.

She wished the vice-regal party would arrive and decide events. Miss Bursford lived now but from day to day; and every season, as she well knew, instead of advancing her nearer to her prize, landed her farther from it. Every day was of value now. She had started in life as a beauty; and like many girls, oblivious of the exigencies brought about by economic social change, had counted too much upon her beauty, and had flown too high. Then there came the Vesey crash; and what a long grudge she owed the Bragintons for that ill deed! After that she had abated her price by degrees; and now, to her mother's terror, had decided to take anybody who might offer

himself. She had been hawked about from London to Dublin, from Dublin to Scarborough, to Bath, Leamington, Dieppe, Florence, and Rome. If Mrs. Bursford heard of a *parti* on the summit of Mont Blanc, they would have toiled up after him, or have sat down at the bottom and waited his descent, to attack him. There had been no end to their efforts; and yet here was Diana Miss Bursford still, seated on a *causeuse* and speculating on the dark-complexioned, intelligent-looking young man who had come in with Mr. Saltasche, while she, at the same time, affected to join in the talk of the group around her as anxiously and hopefully as if it was her first season.

“Why did I not go to London?” replied Mr. Dillon. “Ah, well! that’s all very well, but”—and Mr. Dillon put on an air of resignation and self-abnegation—“there is not the least use in trying to escape your fate that way. If I am a marked man, I may”—and he raised his voice and looked round the room—“just as well stop where I am. Besides, it would be abandoning the field to them; it would be—er—cowardice!”

Hogan fixed his keen eyes on the speaker. "You had reason, then, for apprehension?" he said, with a cross-examining sort of air.

"Reason, sir! reason!" spluttered Mr. Dillon. "Everybody knows what reason any man of property has for apprehension in these days. But what can we expect, sir, with a Government that panders, sir—panders to the mere mob in this way? Communism ——"

"Miss Bursford, have you heard the Italian Opera is coming next week? Town will be very full." Saltasche broke violently into this new topic.

"We are to have a very good company, I am told," said Hogan.

"By-the-bye," said Lord Brayhead, "speaking of the opera, His Excellency has been obliged to give directions concerning the 'Huguenots.' An appointment was made for the manager this afternoon at the Castle."

"Ah! that may be the cause of the delay of their Excellencies," chirped Lady Brayhead, glancing at a timepiece: "quite twenty minutes late."

"The 'Huguenots' is quite calculated to

rouse party, h'm—spirit." This from Saltasche, uttered in the gravest tone. "Now, that Rataplan chorus, and the scene where they clap their hands—Kentish fire, you know—that *must* be excised completely. No one could answer for the consequences, otherwise."

Hogan, who had seen the opera alluded to several times, was trying to make out, what particularly inflammatory material lurked in the scene alluded to.

"Very wrong, very wrong," said the host. "I quite disapprove of this conciliatory policy; it is nothing but cowardice. Why should we make such ignoble concessions?"

"Do you not think it would be better," asked a quiet, gentlemanly man of the last speaker, "to yield in trifles like this than to provoke conflict? Keep the fire and tow apart as much as possible."

Hogan, wondering and amused, and by no means certain that they were in earnest, turned and shot an inquisitive glance at Saltasche.

That mentor returned it with a knowing nod; and, under pretext of taking his young friend to admire a lately-executed bust of the

earl at the other end of the room, said in a low voice,—

“I see you’re diverted. Did ever mortal man hear such foolery? His Excellency, I suppose, is holding a Privy Council to decide whether the Rataplan chorus is to be excised or not. He’ll send alarming despatches to Downing Street over it, to show them what he is doing. Pooh! he must give a little value for his money, you know, or seem to do so.” Then, louder, “Capital likeness, is it not?”

“Oh! speaking expression. Quite so: life-like.”

“More than ever the original was,” muttered the incorrigible Saltasche. “There he comes now: hear the outriders?”

In fact, the noise of the horses could be heard below; and the Lord Lieutenant entered directly, and, after a few minutes’ delay, the party filed off in proper order of precedence.

Hogan fell to Diana Bursford, and Saltasche paired off with the evergreen Blanche. They found themselves close to each other in the dining-room, at the farthest end from the representatives of Royalty; who in their turn were seated beside the usual dignitaries

invited to meet them, and bored each other as a matter of course. Mr. Saltasche devoted himself to his dinner; and on Hogan, devoid as yet of that *aplomb* and *savoir faire* which enables a man to secure his own exclusive interests in a well-bred manner, fell the burthen of talking to the ladies. Blanche was ambitious: she saw clearly that there was no use wasting powder on the gentleman beside her until the needs of his inner man had been satisfied; so she talked to Miss Bursford and at Hogan, who was not a little puzzled at her *œillades* and affectations. She was not altogether bad-looking, and certainly possessed the manner and appearance of a well-bred woman accustomed to society. Her black eyes, however, had a beady, hard look; as to the complexion, even violet powder and a faint suspicion of rouge could not replace the bloom that had fled with youth. Her best points were her teeth and hands; and the first-named she managed to show with every word she uttered, while in using the last, which were loaded with rings, she rivalled the great Father O'Hea himself. She and her sister were the daughters of a needy and disre-

putable baronet; they had a small income—just sufficient to maintain them—which came to them from their mother; and they always accompanied Lady Brayhead in her yearly visits to Ireland. Like their noble relations, they were too insignificant to make any real figure in London; and though they would strenuously have denied it, they thoroughly enjoyed their sojourn in Dublin. They loved domineering over the willing serfs whom they encountered in their aunt's set, and bullied and condescended to their hearts' delight. The dresses of last season did duty very well in Dublin; as also did their second-hand gossip and scandal-mongering.

Mr. Saltasche looked up at last from his *bisque d'écrevisse*, and, peeping between the branches of a table vine mounted in a silver pot on the table between them,—

“Oh, Miss Bursford, I must not forget to speak to you of the concert we're getting up. You will have to help.”

Diana Bursford sang extremely well—that is, in a finished, though unpleasing way—and her amiable cousin grudged her this accomplishment heartily.

"Is this the Soldiers' Home affair, Mr. Saltasche?" cried she, hastily forestalling Miss Bursford's reply. "Now really, do you think it will pay to have amateurs? I fancied you, so sensible as *you* are"—this with a killing look—"would have gone in for professionals at once. It saves so much trouble and worry; now, does it not?"

"Yes, to the amateurs it does indeed," said Diana coldly.

Saltasche looked at her for an instant; but the immovable smiling face gave no sign, except that the brows were the least bit harder looking. She looked away up the table, through the blaze of wax-lights and gorgeous bloom of flowers, past the double line of faces, some serious, some gay, to where his Excellency sat, eating nothing, and barely civil to the withered old lady beside him.

"I really think, in a charitable thing such as this is, that all the performers should be amateurs," ventured Hogan. "It takes such a large sum of money from the profits to pay professionals."

"I have got Major Sands," continued Saltasche, "of the Hussars, to play accompani-

ments ; and the Greys say that they have quite a chorus made up. We want a good pianist for a solo or two, and a good soprano."

"Diana, why don't *you* volunteer?" asked Miss Braginton in her most acid tone, casting a spiteful look at her relative.

"That's exactly what I want, Miss Braginton," said Saltasche; "won't you join your entreaties to mine? You can't refuse us, Miss Bursford: I have heard you sing—often, you know."

Miss Braginton was outnumbered, and she went on eating her quail in silence.

Diana turned and looked full in Hogan's face. "You sing, I am sure, Mr. Hogan; you have a singing voice: I am certain you do,"—and the cold blue eyes looked straight into his. She had put on her most pleasing manner, and her tone was deferential and soft, flattering in the extreme to the young man, who was raw and unpractised as yet in the ways of such women of the world.

Hogan felt a pleased glow steal over him. Flattery's silver tongue was new to him; and it was with a sense of swelling delight and pride that he recognised and accepted his

tribute. His neighbour evidently considered him worth her attention and civility; and he returned gratefully and cordially the glance of the practised coquette.

"I don't sing, I assure you," said he. "I never sang for anybody—anybody, at least, worth talking about."

"There's a confession, now! We shall make something of him, believe me," murmured Saltasche.

Then they passed to other topics; and at last the signal was given by Lady Brayhead, and the ladies sailed off to the drawing-room.

Diana seated herself on a chair near the door. The room was hot, and her complexion after dinner was not trustworthy. Her cousin, who came in last, looked about, and swooped down on her. These ladies were always most scrupulously polite to each other, though the hatred between them was something that could never be measured.

"Diana, love, your dress is charming; and that blue and salmon is perfect—suits you so well, dear."

Miss Bursford cast her eyes over her interlocutor's attire, but finding nothing note-

worthy, contented herself with giving a twitch to a flounce. She knew something was coming.

"Who was that young man that took you down to dinner? Did you catch his name? Nice-looking, eh?" and Miss Braginton's black eyes were fixed on her greedily.

"H'm—I didn't notice, I'm sure," replied Diana carelessly, to outward appearance at least. In reality her guard was up. "His name, if you want it particularly, is O'Rooney Hogan; he's some *protégé* of Mr. Saltasche's. Tell me, Blanche,—is the O'Gorman Mulcahy here?" And Diana, who well knew he was not, pretended to look round for that personage.

But Blanche was off. She pretended to see a signal from Lady Brayhead's end of the room, and took her departure speedily.

Some one began to play on a grand piano. The servants carried in tea into the back drawing-room, and the women all abandoned themselves to the state of semi-torpor in which the interval between their departure from the dining-room and the arrival of the men in the drawing-room is usually spent. At last they entered. Miss Blanche seized

on Saltasche; her sister secured a military widower.

Saltasche was the least bit sulky. He had been snubbed by his Excellency; and in this wise. He had told a capital anecdote, brand new from the Paris Jockey Club; and it had fallen flat, for the simple reason that his Excellency did not know the *raconteur*, and had chosen to consider it a sort of a liberty for a man with whom he was not acquainted to attempt to amuse him. It was so easy for his Excellency to administer the snub; and it was done in a very common way. He had listened, or had seemed to listen, attentively until the point of the story came, and then, instead of laughing amiably and condescendingly, had thrown back his aristocratic chin in a manner that expressed in a way there was no mistaking his conviction that he had certainly heard that story before, and only needed an effort of memory to recall it. Of course, everybody had politely waited for his Excellency to laugh first, save one *aide de camp*, who exploded prematurely, and then chose to consider that Saltasche had placed him in a false position, and was ill-tem-

pered and aggressive towards him in consequence.

Hogan came in last, and dropped himself, in obedience to a glance from Miss Bursford, into a chair beside her.

The rooms were looking their best now ; the guests seemed more at ease ; and their tongues, loosened by good cheer, kept up an endless murmur, broken now and again by ripples of well-bred laughter. The wax-lights cast a mellowed, soft light on the faces—none of them too fresh, for the Bragintons stoutly resisted the introduction of girls—of the women, and toned down the rich hues of their dresses. The Lord Lieutenant, bored to death, was talking of horses with one of his friends on the hearthrug. Mr. Vickars and Mr. Wyldoates, the gentlemen in attendance, stood near the door ; the second named, whenever he met Hogan's eye, turning away his head. A small party—the musical clique, who always attract one another—migrated to the piano ; and a gentleman, who was said to have owed his appointment in the household to his vocal powers, sat down and sang an Italian buffo song with fine spirit and execution.

"Do you know him?" asked Diana of Hogan. She was a little curious to find out the gentleman's set, and had resort to the customary device—not by any means in the "best form," as the slang goes—of putting through him a categorical list of names of people of note.

She was foiled in this; for the barrister, reading her purpose, and being very slightly acquainted with the gentleman alluded to, made answer in the affirmative. In reality, he only knew him professionally.

"What a pretty woman his wife is! Delightful musician; I heard her play the other evening."

"I am not fond of music at all—have no ear," he replied. "Moreover, I hold that pretty women have sufficiently fulfilled their duty to society in looking nice. They have no business with accomplishments."

"You think, then, that only plain women should be allowed to cultivate their minds?"

"Certainly; to me it seems a fearful extravagance for a pretty woman. They have no business being clever. When the true philosopher's millennium arrives, it will be unlawful for any woman possessed of more

than a certain number (to be agreed on) of good points, to sing, play, draw, or indulge in any of the current accomplishments of the day."

"Oh dear! And a good-looking blue-stocking, or a *belle* who dabbles in the 'ologies?"

"I would make such infractions an indictable offence; and I would visit aggravated cases, such as the dead languages or mathematics, with the extreme penalty of the law."

"Are you serious? I think not," she said, turning and looking directly at him. The slightly sardonic expression of his eyes and mouth disappeared as he replied.

"I am not serious; and I am too. We are not at all logical or consistent in our method. It is tacitly acknowledged that women who are devoid of mere personal charms are expected to make up for the deficiency by acquired attractions; but if accomplishments, or indeed solid learning (for they seem to take that up now), be a marketable acquisition, why should not all women possess that additional charm?"

"If," said Miss Bursford with an emphasis:

"that is by no means agreed ; and for myself I quite disapprove of ladies intruding into men's sphere. I don't in the least see how this higher education of women is to help them." Diana said this with real feeling, for she had tried botany and conchology one summer, but not finding those branches of science any special aid, she had concluded to put off the "*blue stage*" a little longer.

"I don't see it either," returned he thoughtfully ; "it is not that women in general are in need of higher education ; the mistake does not lie so much in the quality or quantity of instruction meted out to women, as in the mode of administering it. It is quite a mistake to suppose that women in general are inferior in point of education to men."

Miss Bursford set down her coffee-cup and looked at him.

"I really mean what I say," he went on. "It is notorious, and admitted on all sides, that in the lowest classes, both in the rural districts and in the towns, the women are infinitely beyond the men in intellect."

"Yes, yes ; I have heard that. I quite recollect it. Lord Brayhead says the chief

work of the missionaries, and that sort of people who go amongst the lower orders, is accomplished by women, and they are so much easier to work among and instruct than the men."

"Quite so. And even ascending a step or two in the social scale,—getting up amongst the traders, shopkeepers, farmers,—the women at the present moment are enormously, destructively in advance.

"I really have heard that the women of the Roman Catholic classes in this country are very well educated—play, sing, draw, dance, and all that sort of thing; the nuns, you know, are so nice."

"They can do more than that," said Hogan, smiling at a droll reminiscence which came to his mind—that of young Brangan's blunder in the tea-room at the Raffertys' ball. "But that's not the question. I disapprove of the entire separation of the girls and boys; it seems to me so irrational. They are to live together afterwards, and be companions for life; and how are they to get along? The boys are always herded together when young, and are not subjected to any refining influences.

I remember at the college of St. Ignatius there was not even a woman-servant in the house. A little fellow was dying there, and he had to be carried out to lodgings, otherwise his mother could not have been near him—according to the rule she would not be allowed into the infirmary. Then later on we find them living in their clubs, or substitutes for clubs; anywhere, in fact, out of their own houses, and away from the restraints of the female society to which they are so unaccustomed, and which, I am sorry to say, is distasteful to them in most instances.”

“It really looks like it,” she replied; “and in London it is as bad as it can be. My friends there say the labour of collecting men for their entertainments is absolutely dreadful. Men won’t go into society nowadays; you may get them to dinner-parties, but as to balls and that sort of thing, it is impossible. I can’t imagine why.”

Miss Bursford was called upon to sing now, so Hogan found his way over to Mr. Saltasche, who was flirting, out of pure good-nature, as men do sometimes, with Miss Braginton. The lady continued her conversation in a *sotto voce*

tone, while her cousin was singing one of the eternal Claribel or Gabriel effusions.

Mr. Saltasche made a little *moue*, as if to impress on her the necessity of keeping silence ; but the young lady returned, with a pretty infantile shake of her head,—

“Don’t ask me ; pray don’t. I have heard it *so often*—over and over again, I do assure you. The effort would be quite beyond me.”

The two gentlemen smiled in reply. Both of them read clearly the ill-nature that lurked in her words, and both saw in it still more clearly its prompting motive—the desire to please them, and cunningly depreciate a possible rival ; and so they smiled amiably in encouragement and appreciation of the manœuvre. Each appropriated the implied flattery to himself : Saltasche by virtue of his large fortune, high standing, and admitted desirability ; and the younger man with a keen sense of his new importance and dignity. The evening was indeed a triumph for him. To be admitted to such a house was in itself an inestimable honour. But to be invited, to be held worthy to meet the Viceroy himself, it was almost overwhelming. And then Miss

Bursford's manner was certainly cordial and affable in the extreme. He looked across the room to where she was sitting at the piano, her cousin, Colonel Bursford, turning over the leaves of her music. The light shone full on her face and figure. "Gone off rather, I should say," thought he, "and decidedly too thin; but what a style and air she has!"

This was true. Diana was looking her best. An artful touch of rice-powder veiled the sallowness of her temples and toned down the sharp outline of her rather high cheek-bones. She was richly dressed; and her hair, plentiful, whether her own or not, was becomingly and softly arranged. Her small hands were white; and the wrists, rather too anatomical for beauty, were judiciously concealed by handsome bracelets. She sang well, but with a hard and unsympathetic, if highly-cultured, voice.

The viceregal party left as early as it was possible for them to get away; and after a short interval the rest of the guests followed suit. Saltasche, who was engaged on a committee which had been formed to get up a concert for a charitable institution—one of the

many which he patronized, and which in turn patronized him—remained to the last.

“How very well Lord —— is looking! Never saw him better—never!” He said this to Lord Brayhead, who was staring absently into the fire. People who entertain the Castle set feel usually a sort of proprietary interest in them; so it was with the air of one deeply concerned in the matter that the host made answer.

“I am glad to hear you say so; very glad. Yes, I think he looks very well,—much better, indeed. Quite so.”

“Aunt, did you observe her Excy’s dress? Oh, so sweet: lemon and strawberry ——” This was from the second Braginton.

“And ice-cream,” muttered Mr. Saltasche, who was wanting to get off to his cigar.

“And quite new too,” said Mrs. Bursford acidly; “a rarity that——”

“No, then, for I heard her say to Lady Guinevère Fraisefeuilles last week that she had been at the great Gore House ball, and that it was so unlucky Lady de Montfort had a dress exactly the same. Both came from Paris.” So spoke Miss Blanche, the well-informed.

"Well," interposed Mr. Saltasche, who did not know to what lengths this gossip might be extended by the voluble lady, "I have engaged Mr. Hogan ; and now I must have these young ladies' assistance. Oh now ! Mr. Papillon has also promised me ; really, ladies I am even going to sing myself. I am—in the chorus."

It was finally settled that the younger of the Bragintons was to sing in the chorus ; and Hogan, who was firmly persuaded that it was out of the question he could sing at a Protestant concert, allowed Saltasche to arrange that he was to call at the Bursfords' house in Merrion Square to see the music proposed, which was in Miss Diana's keeping. As they went down the stairs, Lord Brayhead held back Saltasche an instant, and murmured in his ear, "I received a telegram this evening. Mr. Wyldoates has gone up to Paris to be under the care of doctors there. No hope of him at all. They speak of gangrene——"

Mr. Saltasche gave utterance to a sort of whistle. "I'd better tell this man, then, and see what he is inclined to do."

"I leave it in your hands entirely, Mr. Saltasche," said Lord Brayhead, turning back to the drawing-room.

And they sallied forth. The night was clear and cold, and the stars were brilliant overhead. The street was perfectly quiet and deserted; not a creature to be seen. Saltasche struck a match on his boot-heel, and lighting a cigar, took Hogan's arm and set out at a brisk pace.

"You mentioned something once, Mr. Hogan, of your intention of trying for a seat in Parliament some of these days."

"A seat! Hey? Yes!"

"A seat"—puff—"in Parliament; because if you were seriously inclined for it, I might"—puff—"put you up to a good thing."

Hogan stood stock-still with amazement, and looked at his companion; but the darkness left nothing discernible of Saltasche's face but his bright cunning eyes, which shone from between his half-closed eyelids almost as brilliantly as the burning tip of the cheroot.

"It is possible before the month is out," said Saltasche slowly and indistinctly, speaking

with his cigar between his teeth, "that a seat will be vacant."

"Ha! You mean that man who was obliged to resign some time ago, and is at Hyères now for his health?"

"He is not at Hyères now, and his recovery is impossible. So anybody that wants can take the ball on the hop. Hum."

"Peatstown," said Hogan. "I know it. I have been there at quarter sessions; precious nest of Nationalists. Nothing but an Ultra will get in there."

"*Ultra?*" repeated Saltasche, taking the cigar out of his mouth; "Ultramontane, do you mean?"

"Tut; not at all. Very opposite. Ultra Repealer; Ultra Home Ruler. Poor Wyldoates got in through the priests. I recollect it well."

"Humph!" said Saltasche; "that was before the Ballot. They will get a taste of that novelty now. By Jove, the wind will be taken out of all our sails by that."

Saltasche stopped under a lamp, and looked at his watch.

"Lord Brayhead is wanting to run a railway out to Lead Mines. I'll send you from

Hanaper and Die Sele's some title-deeds to look over. He owns most of the ground to be broken through : but at the same time one must be sure, and have everything in order."

Hogan murmured his acknowledgments.

"And at the same time, Mr. Hogan—I speak as a friend—now don't you think you had better consider about Peatstown? No time to be lost. It would cost, I daresay, a thousand pounds."

"Any prospect of a contest? In that case the Liberals might help to keep the Opposition out of it. Nay? And then you see, sir, it would involve the sacrifice of my professional engagements, in great part. Really it is a risk to a man who has his living to earn ; only a barrister in a well-rooted practice can afford the luxury of Parliament. Moreover, Dissolution is only a year and a half or so distant."

"Nonsense, my dear fellow ; the Liberals have an overwhelming majority. They literally have booked the Government of this country for an age to come. God bless me—what can shake them with such a majority? Besides, as a member of Parliament you

will have opportunities to compensate for the loss of your time. There are committees: you are the very man for such things; commissions and directorships innumerable. Then, the position, the social advantages!"

Position! Social advantages!! The wily man of the world had well calculated the force of his words, and their effect on his friend. Hogan was, indeed, dazzled by the glittering prospect dangled so skilfully over his head, and was astounded at the wonderful chance thrown in his way. He had, indeed, entertained visions, very airy and unsubstantial visions, of risking his fate at the approaching Dissolution.

A Dissolution is the best chance for men of his stamp; the chances being that in the general hurly-burly and scramble some small constituency may be overlooked, and either the previous member returned unopposed, or some outsider get in easily by blazoning the particular clap-trap of the hour as his motto. Hogan was on the watch for some such cheap investment for his money. So, indeed, was the Bishop; who, if the outlay were necessary, had

determined to give his nephew a helping hand financially.

"I must consider about it," he said hurriedly. "Mr. Saltasche, I am greatly obliged to you for your kindness. I'll let you know in a few days."

"See," continued Saltasche, "you know Peatstown is Lord Kilboggan's place; and his family have always influenced the elections there—always controlled them, begad. They're not resident, of course. They live abroad, on account of the son's health. Well, the nephew, an elder brother of that A. D. C. Wyldoates, and a finished scamp too, is somewhere round. He is heir, you know, and it is not unlikely he'd try for it. These people," with a backward gesture of his head signifying the Brayhead family, "don't agree with the Kilboggans; never did. So what I'm coming to is: you should steal a march on them—go down and proclaim your intentions, take your soundings, in short."

"Can't do that till the man's dead, hey? It wouldn't be decent."

"Try and make up your mind by Saturday, —this is Wednesday; and come in and tell me

your final decision : take care not to ventilate the thing. Good-night, then." And Mr. Saltasche mounted a car and drove to the railway.

Hogan strode on across town, ruminating the affair. He did not know what to think of it. It might, after all, be the best chance that ever would present itself to him ; and, indeed, how could he hope for a better ? Young as he was, he had seen fortunes lost and reputations impaired in the struggle of elections. Everything seemed to combine to favour him. The Kilboggans were in bad odour. Lord Brayhead was to assist. That was certainly an unaccountable combination. He felt sure Saltasche would not be so gracious for nothing ; no doubt he would require some indemnification. But, after all, what was he indebted to him for, more than a friendly hint ? And it was to be considered, too, that Dis-solution was not more than a year off : if he were not to be re-elected, there would be all the money gone for nothing—a thousand at least. The honour would be dear at that price. And there was also the possibility of failure in the first instance to be considered. If the parish

priest were powerful enough to return Mr. Wyldoates, he might be able to "cast" him. In those remote country parishes the priests are omnipotent. There was the Ballot, to be sure. But the Ballot Act was not long in force at the time of which we write; and Hogan, who knew the unscrupulous people whose interests were in direct opposition to and jeopardized by it, had little hope in its potentiality to aid him.

"Night brings counsel," thought he wearily, as he turned into bed; "and the first thing to do in the morning must be to see the Bishop."



